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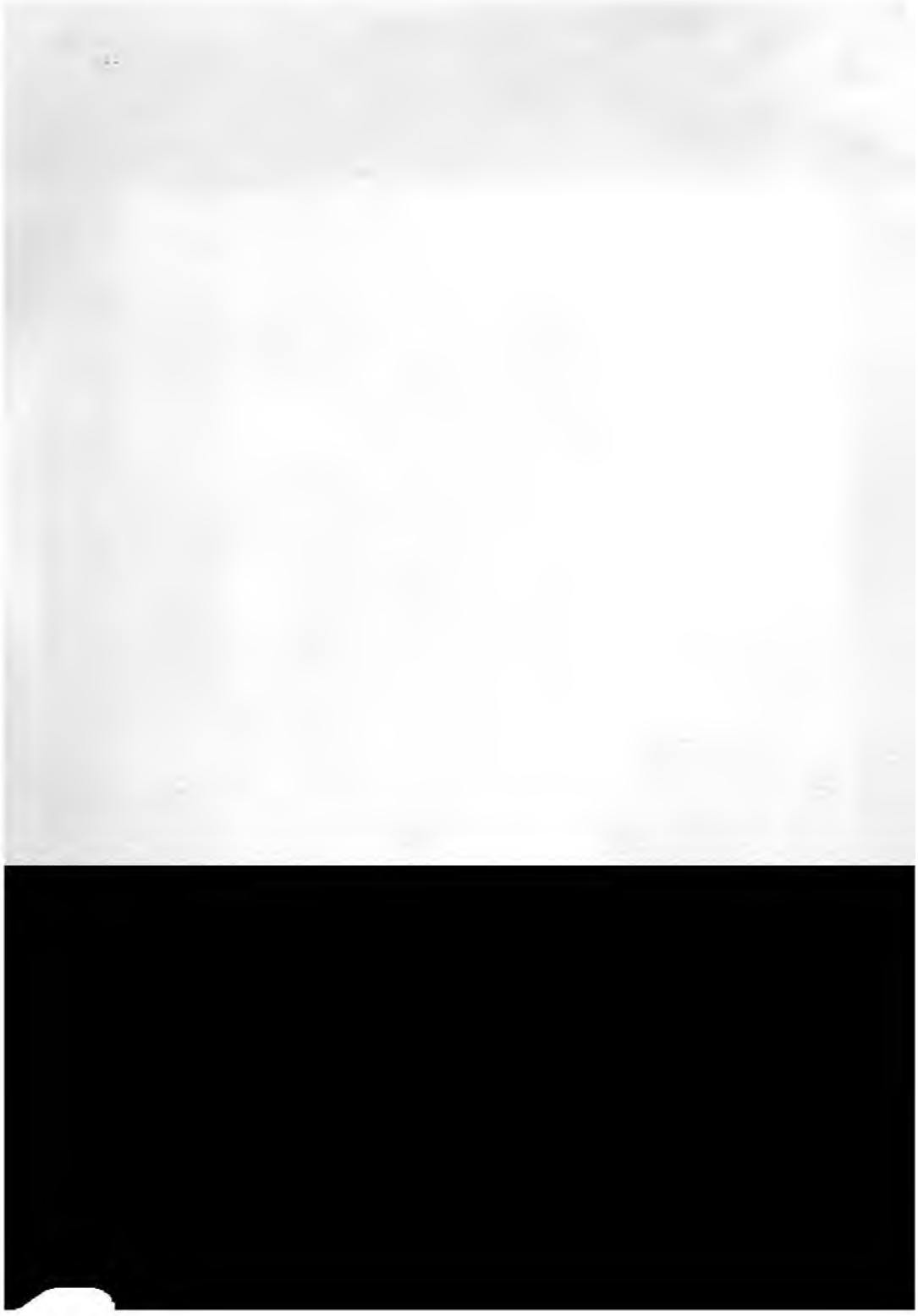

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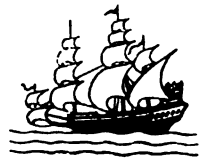

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Contents

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Historical	1
II.	Jamaica	11
III.	The Town of Kingston	27
IV.	The People of Jamaica	41
V.	The Philosophy of a Jamaican Gamin	57
VI.	The Devotion of the Jamaican Negro	65
VII.	Turtle Fishing	73
VIII.	The Women of Wild Man Street	81
IX.	The West Indian Army	89
X.	A West Indian Court House	99
XI.	The Military Camp at Newcastle	107
XII.	The Recreations of the Black Man	115
XIII.	The Dandy and the Coquette	127
XIV.	Bog Walk	135
XV.	The Politics of a Jamaican Negro	143

Contents

CHAP.		PAGE
XVI.	The White Man's Politics	155
XVII.	The Railway in Jamaica	163
XVIII.	Alligator Shooting in a West Indian Swamp	171
XIX.	Commercial Jamaica	181
XX.	The Flora of Jamaica	193
XXI.	A West Indian Race-Course	201
XXII.	The Hill Stations	211
XXIII.	A Fragment	219
XXIV.	Matters of Interest to Tourists	227
XXV.	Certain Things the West Indian Tourist must not do	237
XXVI.	The Caribbean Group	243
XXVII.	Hayti	257
XXVIII.	In Conclusion	265

List of Illustrations

1.	Coming from Mass, St. Lucia	*Frontispiece*
		FACING PAGE
2.	Lightermen, off Barbadoes	4
3.	Sunrise over the Hills, Jamaica	8
4.	Castries Bay, St. Lucia	12
5.	Kingston Harbour and Port Henderson	16
6.	Constant Spring, Jamaica	18
7.	A Negro	22
8.	A Street in Kingston, Jamaica	26
9.	An Old Gateway, Kingston	30
10.	A Fruit-Seller on a Side-Walk, Kingston	34
11.	The Tobacco Market, Kingston	38
12.	A Market Woman, Jamaica	40
13.	An Old Woman	44
14.	Cocoanut Palms, Falmouth, Jamaica	46
15.	A Milkmaid, Barbadoes	48
16.	Waiting Maids	52
17.	Diving Boys, Kingston	56
18.	Diving Boys, off Barbadoes	60
19.	Going to Church	64
20.	A Gingerbread-seller, St. Lucia	70

List of Illustrations

FACING PAGE

21. The Turtle Wharf, Kingston, Jamaica 72
22. Boats off Dominica 76
23. Night, Anotta Bay, Jamaica 80
24. A Coloured Girl 84
25. A Soldier of the West Indian Regiment . . . 88
26. A Tropical Landscape near Castleton 92
27. Outside a West Indian Court House 98
28. A Negro Nurse with Chinese Children, Jamaica . . 104
29. Tropical Rain 106
30. A House on the Hills 110
31. Going to Work, Barbadoes 114
32. Rosie, a Jamaican Negress 120
33. Countrywoman going to Market, Barbadoes . . . 124
34. A Martinique Lady 126
35. On the Road to Market, Jamaica 132
36. A House near the Bog Walk, Jamaica 134
37. Dry Harbour, Jamaica 138
38. Sunset, North Coast, Jamaica 144
39. On the Beach, Barbadoes 148
40. Off Trinidad 150
41. Steamers unloading, Barbadoes 154
42. An Evening Party, St. Thomas 160

List of Illustrations

FACING PAGE

50. The Market-place, Barbadoes 188
51. A Terrace Garden on the Hills, Jamaica . . . 192
52. Hut on a Plantation, Jamaica 196
53. A Jockey at Cumberland Pen, Jamaica . . . 200
54. A Coloured Lady on a Race-course, Jamaica . . 204
55. A Bungalow on the Hills, Jamaica 208
56. The Market, Mandeville 210
57. Stalls outside the Market, Mandeville 214
58. A Road in Mandeville 216
59. Sunset over the Hills 218
60. Huts, St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica 222
61. The Cathedral at Spanish Town, Jamaica . . . 226
62. A Garden Terrace, Jamaica 230
63. Resting by the Way, Jamaica 234
64. Outhouses near Kingston, Jamaica 236
65. The Capital of St. Thomas 240
66. Black River, Jamaica 242
67. Roseau, the Capital of Dominica 246
68. Mont Pelée, Martinique 248
69. An Old Man, St. Thomas 250
70. Nevis 252
71. A Guadeloupe Lady 256
72. Huts on a Country Road, Jamaica 260
73. Passengers embarking from a Quay, St. Ann's Bay . 264
74. Evening after Rain, Jamaica 268

The illustrations in this volume were engraved in England by the Hentschel Colourtype Process.

ST. LUCIA

COMING FROM MASS, ST. LUCIA

CHAPTER I

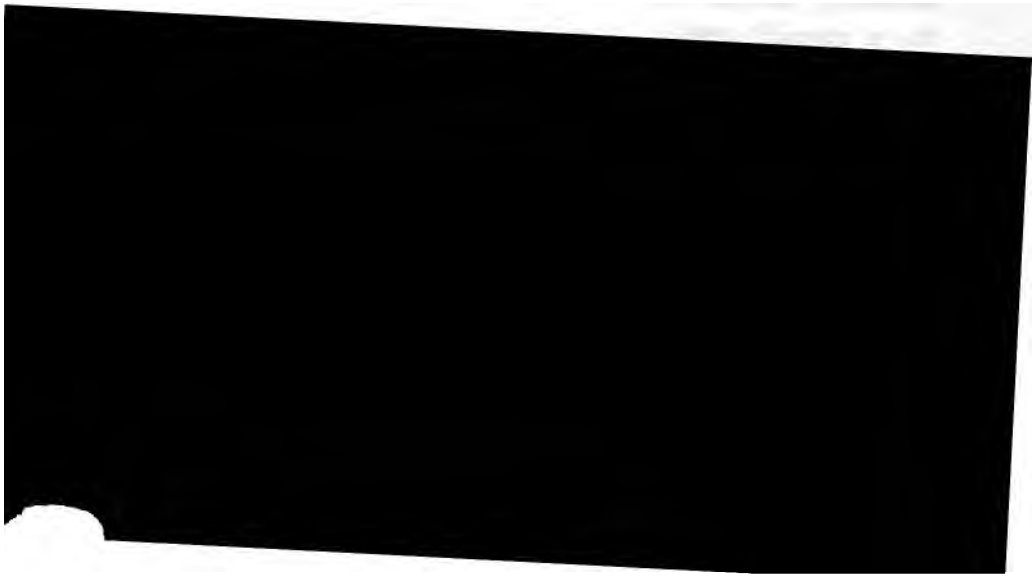
HISTORICAL

In Britain we have lost the art of correct perspective. We see distant things through jaundiced eyes; as a nation we are too prone to regard over-sea lands and peoples with compassion tempered with contempt, or with envy and timidity. To ensure our respect and sympathy a country must be successful; we have no room in our Empire for failures. America, because of her commercial genius and industrial enterprise, we respect and revere and imitate. We exaggerate the successes of the States and credit the American with commercial omnipotence. The word American stands in the unprinted national dictionary as meaning efficient, successful, up-to-date. I have heard that English tradesmen have labelled English-made goods "American" in order that a quick sale might be ensured in Britain's capital. We refuse to believe that America has ceased to be related to us by ties of kinship; to the Englishmen of the homeland Americans are first cousins. And so it is, conversely, with England and the West Indies.

The West Indies

At home we are apt to think of the West Indies as a scattered group of poverty-stricken islands, barren of riches, planted somewhere in some tropical sea, and periodically reduced to absolute desolation by hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanoes. The poverty of the Western Indies is proverbial. Occasionally Imperial Parliament brings forward some measure, which, in the opinion of some individual, might tend to relieve the distress and commercial poverty of our West Indian possessions; at other times a fund is started at the Mansion-House to help the West Indian victims of some fearful tornado or earthquake. That is all that is generally known of the great islands of the Caribbean Sea. In our dreams of Empire we prefer to think of Canada, Africa, and strenuous Australasia. Commercially and politically our West Indies are, according to the general idea, more than half derelict, and wholly without the attractions of wealth and promise. We forget that these Western islands were at one time the richest of England's possessions; we do not realise how rich they, some day, will again become. If Britain only understood aright she would know that it is only through her own neglect, through her half-hearted, penurious

LIGHTERMEN, OFF BARBADOES

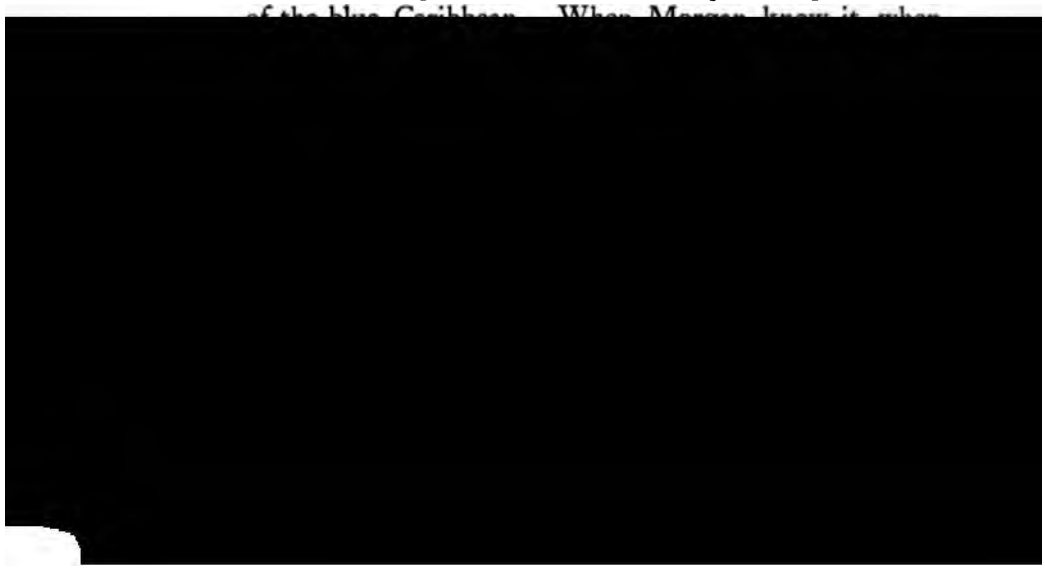


holds and crowded quarter-decks, to return from a six months' voyage in the Indies crowded with treasure and glory, we count the islands barren. We forget that West Indian wealth was invested in Britain's greatness years before we had an empire. We forget that Britain's navy was founded by men who were trained to war and seamanship among those islands of the West. More than once have these islands seen the pride and glory of England hanging in the balance, and once, at least, the Indies knew before the homeland that a blow, which had threatened the very foundations of British greatness, had been hurled in vain.

That was in the time of Burke and Fox and Rodney. Spain and France and Holland had combined, and in one great battle threatened to crush the power of England, and to wrest from her the supremacy of the seas. England trembled, and the popular party advocated surrender and peace. France and Spain wanted the Indies. Rodney sailed from England to uphold the power and dominion of his race. He sailed amidst the sullen silence of a people whose power he was to uphold. A few weeks after his sailing a message was despatched from Parliament commanding him not to fight. He was to strike his colours and surrender the Indies. But the message arrived too late. Rodney had already fought and won when the craven message reached him. The battle had happened off Dominica, and the flag of England remained triumphant in the Caribbean Sea. The English ships were victorious, and Rodney had saved his country against his country's will. And since

that day no one has challenged England's supremacy in the islands of the West.

The history of the West Indies is filled with chapters as strong even as this; in no corner of the world have so many brave deeds been done for "England, home, and beauty." Stories of mighty Spanish galleons sunk by British ships of war; of pillage and bloodshed and treasure; of the battles of France and Spain and England; of the wealth of the Spanish main, intercepted among these islands, and stored in some West Indian port for convenience of British merchant adventure houses, are encountered at every step on our journey through the records of the Caribbean group. We read of buccaneers and filibusters; of Morgan, the last of the tribe, knighted and made Vice-Governor of Jamaica; of the doings of the redoubtable Kidd; of the bloodiness of Blackbeard; of the countless list of names, some high-sounding, which at last were painted in crimson splashes on the gallows slip at Port Royal headland. Port Royal itself deserves a niche in the temple of fame. The richest and the most vicious town the world ever knew; so it was before the clean ocean washed away its vice and corruption, and buried it deep in the pure water of the blue Caribbean. When Morgan knew it, when



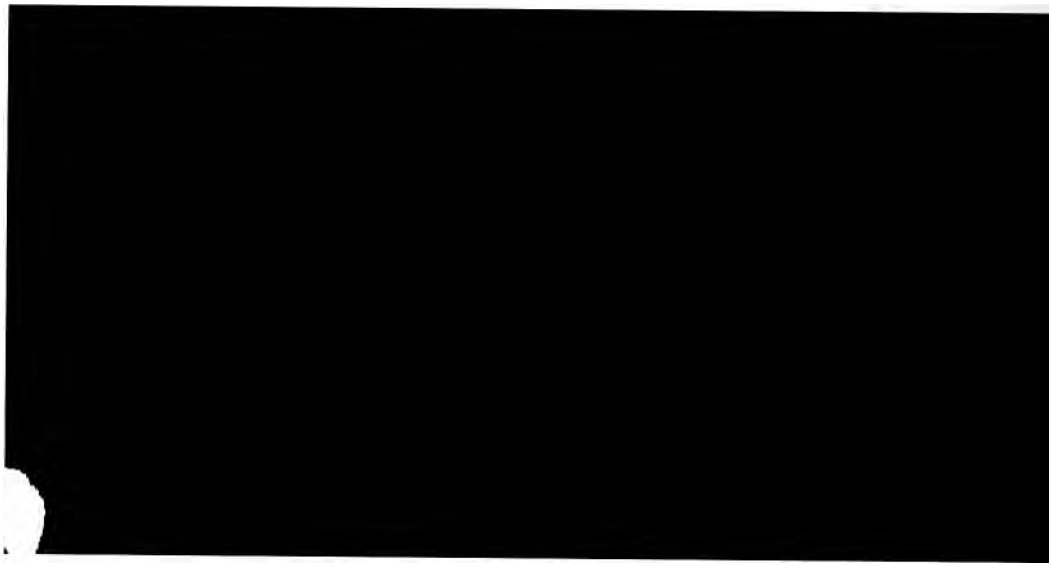
heavy golden coins whose value no one cared to estimate. The drinking shops were filled with cups of gold and silver, embellished with flashing gems. Each house was a treasure store. The place was a gilded hell, and mammon held sovereign sway over its people. Such wealth and vice and debauchery had never been dreamed of. Common seamen bathed in the richest wine, and hung their ears with heavy gold rings studded with the costliest gems. Dagger thrusts were as common as brawls, and the body of a murdered man would remain in a dancing-room until the dancing was over. Gold and precious stones were cheap, but life was cheaper. And every man in that crowd of pirates lived beneath the shadow of the gallows.

Finer it is to remember the Western voyages of Drake and Hawkins and all the old sea-dogs who first proclaimed the might of British seamen. Picture them, scurvy-stricken, reduced by disease and famine, resting and recruiting in the wide bays of any West Indian isle. Imagine their joy at finding luscious fruits and sweet, health-giving water. Then see them in their tiny ships darting from behind the cover of some wooded neck of land, surprising a galleon ten times their weight, scuttling the little vessel and manning the Spanish leviathan with British seamen. How many little English barques lie beneath the dark blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico! Having found their prize and tasted the joy of victory, the British captains thirst for more. They sail the Spanish seas in a Spanish ship, and sack the coast towns, levying heavy toll; they

fight great battles and pound the deeply laden treasure ships with Spanish cannon trimmed by British gunners. They select the richest spoil and fling the rest to the waves. How many bars of gold and silver, how many crates of silks, and iron boxes filled with gems; how many sacks of doubloons have sunk in these Western waters, and lie there now, buried amidst the skeleton of a rotting vessel!

All these things were done in these seas by Englishmen in the days of old, done for greed of gain and the lust of bloodshed. Done also in the name of religion, and because two sects, worshipping the same God, quarrelled in regard to ritual; and because one sect put a sword at the throat of the other and said, Do as we do, or die. Just as the Inquisition proved to be the undoing of the might and wealth of Spain, so did the Inquisition, indirectly, give the West Indies to the English. The West Indian waters formed the training school of Drake and Frobisher, Hawkins and Raleigh; and these men founded the navy. In later days Rodney revived the Caribbean school, and there Nelson learned how to outwit the French in ocean battles. Because of these things, but not only because of these things, do

SUNRISE OVER THE HILLS, JAMAICA



of history save where their existence first influenced the politics of Europe. The Spaniards were the first white men to tread their fragrant shores and bring destruction to a race of wild red men whose first instinct was that of fear. Columbus, the Genoese mariner, first and greatest of all explorers, anchored his tiny vessels in Morant Bay, Jamaica, on his second voyage to America. The beauty of the place bewildered him, and when his patron, the King of Spain, asked for a description of the island, the artistic Genoese crumpled a piece of paper, and presented that as a picture of the rugged formation of the Queen of the Antilles. Four times did Columbus journey to the Indies, which were annexed by him to the Spanish Crown. The horrors of the early Spanish rule can only be imagined. Millions of the gentle Caribs were transported to the mainland, and worked to death in the Spanish gold mines. Those that were permitted to remain were, if they survived the Inquisition, pressed into slavery.

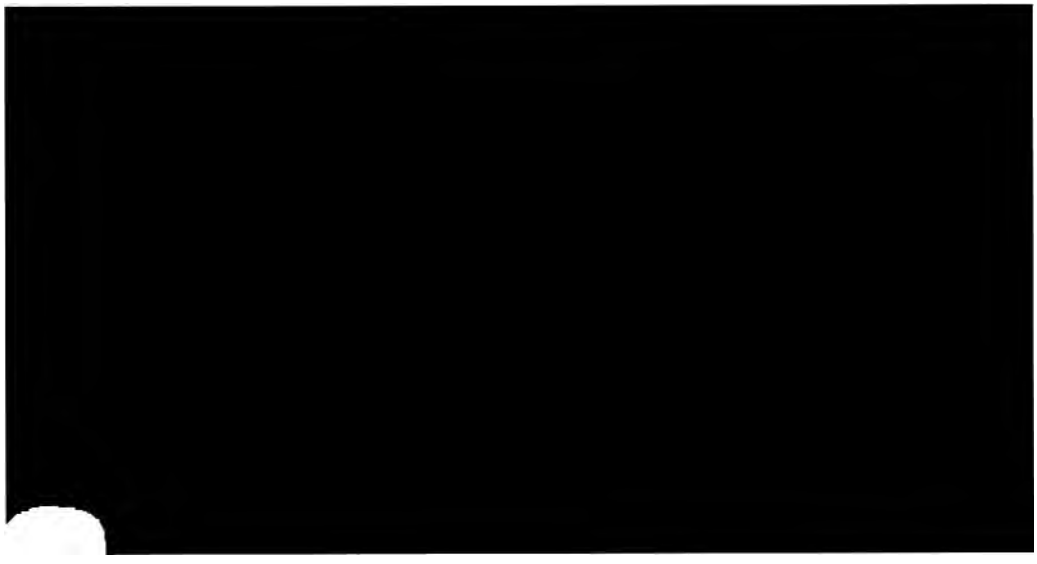
So the Spaniards ruled for a century and a half; for one hundred and sixty years they claimed the bulk of the West Indian islands as their own. This claim was uncontested by the powers of Europe, but the Spaniards were harassed always by the buccaneers, French and English, whose ships swept the main in search of prey. Whether England was at war with Spain or not, the English sea-dogs were always at the throats of Spaniards in the western hemisphere.

The Protector Cromwell essayed to break the Western power of Spain, and sent Penn and Venables to

crush them out of the Indies. In an engagement off Domingo the British were defeated, but the doughty English captains retired on to Jamaica, which they annexed to England. Then the French filibusters drove the Spaniards out of Hayti, and gave it to the crown of France. The French had held the smaller Antilles—Martinique, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Antigua. In times of war with France, Britain had taken these islands, but they had been retaken by the French. It was in Rodney's time that they all came permanently under the English flag. Nowadays the British hold all the larger islands, the French retain the smaller lands of Martinique, Guadaloupe, Deserva, Marie Galante, Les Saints, St. Bartholomew, and part of St. Martin, the Dutch hold five, the Danish three, and Spain still holds three. One or two are part of the Venezuelan Republic, Puerto Rico belongs to the U.S.A., and several are independent.

JAMAICA

CASTRIES BAY, ST. LUCIA



CHAPTER II

JAMAICA

SITTING under the shade of a verandah, watching the brilliant butterflies and many-coloured birds fluttering and wheeling among the sweet-scented flowers of Jamaica, it is difficult for one to remember how one passed out of England—I had almost written out of the world—and reached this land, which surely should be called God's Island. But, I remember, a day or two ago we reached Turk's Island, and after handing a few bags of mails to a black, buccaneer-like boatman, who said he was the postmaster, we glided along the shore—a few miles of low-lying, palm-treed coral-land—and sailed into the Caribbean Sea. And so we reached the tropics—the other side of the world. At last we were among the hundred isles of the West Indies, and in the full glare of the tropic sun. The paint blistered and bubbled on the handrail, and the sea seemed a giant mirror, on which the sun flashed silver-white, with never-ceasing, blinding force. There seemed to be no air; the space it should have occupied was transparent,

and, apparently, empty. It was difficult to move; truth to tell, I remember feeling a little uncomfortable; but, all the same, it was heavenly.

By Turk's Island it rained. There was a sudden darkness, the blinding sun disappeared, the air became cooler, and then down came the rain. The deck of the ship became a waterfall, and for thirty minutes or so we were enveloped in a furious deluge.

But ten minutes after the rain had ceased, the deck, the sails, and the canvas deck-awnings were dry as though sun-scorched for centuries. That was our weather. We lived on fruit and tepid baths. It was too hot for sleep, too hot for work, too hot for conversation. In the tropics the only thing possible is "nothing"—and a long, iced drink.

Lolling on deck in the daytime, we could watch the flying fish, the dolphin, the drifting nautilus, and the hungry shark; or view the islands as slowly they glided backwards into impenetrable haze. To the right Cuba, a thin irregular line on the horizon, glistening gold above the blue-white of the sea; to the left Hayti, the land in which the black man is supreme, and where, in spite of science and the twentieth century, cannibalism

slaughtered every white on the island. Since then Hayti has been a republic—a republic with many presidents and many disturbances.

At night there was the wonderful moon and the cool, fresh air. It was pleasant to watch the sea; astern, we left a living, toiling, twisting thread of silver foam; ahead, our bows struck the water, and it flashed fire. Sometimes all was dark; sometimes the sea blazed with phosphorescent light. But always overhead the yellow moon and the golden stars were studded in the blue-black dome of night.

A few hours after leaving Turk's Island we found Jamaica. Afar off, through the brilliant air of the morning, we saw a tiny pepper-box, which presently turned into a sugar-caster, and gradually, by many complicated but interesting evolutions, developed into a full-fledged lighthouse. The lighthouse is on Morant Point, and Morant Point is the beginning of Jamaica. Columbus named the island Santa Gloria; he was the first European to be bewitched by that low coast-line, all gold shot with green and darker green, stretching back from the sea to the foot of the great Blue Mountains; the Blue Mountains, whose peaks, shrouded in white mist, are buried deep in the hazy sky. Along the shore we sailed, past cane plantations, banana groves, white houses, snow-white roads, and great everlasting clumps of graceful palm-trees. Ahead, standing out at the end of a neck of land, we saw Port Royal—the real, wonderful, most romantic Port Royal, doubly robed in glory by fiction as well as

history. Here came Nelson, Rodney, Jervis, Collingwood, and every mighty sailor England ever had.

Moored to these wharves have lain prizes, rich beyond compare, newly snatched from Spain and France. Here England's flag, proudly flung from masts of wooden warships, has proclaimed victory; and here also English ships, battered and war-stained, have lain under the dread banner of the buccaneer. For Port Royal was a pirate stronghold centuries before it became a British naval base.

Sailing along the six miles of narrow coral ridge which connects the town with the land, it is not difficult to conjure up the Port Royal Nelson knew. The palm-trees and the luxuriant tropical foliage still abound; the native craft and the nigger boatmen do not seem to belong to to-day, and Kingston, hidden and guarded by this strip of land, seems somehow to suggest romance and mystery. The sea all round is studded with treacherous coral reefs, some of which, just showing above the water, are thickly grown with palm-trees. The effect is beautiful in the extreme; the clumps of trees, planted apparently on nothing, are growing straight out of the sea.

KINGSTON HARBOUR AND PORT HENDERSON

Jamaica

I remember that our good ship was at last made fast to the wooden quay, and the black-faced, white-coated labourers grinned us greeting as we stepped ashore. After some excitement with many half-castes representing the Customs, the hotels, and the buggies, who each and all claimed a portion of our baggage, we safely emerged from the dock district into the dusty main road of Kingston. It was strange to find up-to-date, twentieth century, American, electric cars screaming along roads which, if they were ever built at all, were certainly completed two centuries back; and it was even more strange to learn that these cars have not entirely depopulated Kingston.

I remember being possessed of a great idea of walking to my hotel. A fresh sea breeze was blowing, and the prospect of a stroll through the town was peculiarly inviting But unfortunately the dock gates were barricaded with buggies, and to successfully evade the manœuvres of one only meant falling into the clutches of another. Passage between the vehicles there was none, and when I attempted to step through one carriage to get clear of the others, the fiendish driver whipped his ponies and whirled me out of the dockyard before I could regain my presence of mind. Outside, the delighted man claimed me as a passenger, and when I found that I was sitting on a singularly pompous and overheated Britisher, who had been captured in the same enterprising manner, I forgot to be angry, and began to apologise. The result was entirely satisfactory—the pompous Britisher never

forgave me. We dropped him, I remember, the first time the ponies took it into their heads to slow up, but the worthy man seriously offended our driver by refusing to pay. For half an hour they wrangled in the crowded main street, and frequently I feared the sudden death of my white friend. However, the storm came to a sudden and dramatic finish by the skilful capture of the weary Englishman by another buggyman. We left him cursing Jamaica and buggies, and particularly all black men. After a series of adventures and narrow escapes we at last reached the Constant Spring Hotel. The driver suggested that I should pay him a sovereign, but he accepted ten shillings with the utmost cheerfulness. Afterwards I discovered that the fare was certainly not more than a dollar.

I sat in a comfortable wicker chair in the commodious entrance hall of the hotel and tried to collect my scattered senses. The excitement of my buggy journey, and the interest of my first glimpse of the capital of the Queen of the Antilles, had somewhat unstrung my thinking faculties. I was alone in a strange hotel in a strange country. My luggage was heaven knows where, and my companions, Forrest and

CONSTANT SPRING, JAMAICA

able-looking John crow, perched on a bush of scarlet blossoms just in front of where I sat, regarded me with a look of thoughtful contempt. As my nerves got more settled I became conscious of the rich perfumes of the flowers; the insects were buzzing and chirping outside, and the strong sun gave to my shaded resting-place an air of quiet coolness. Graceful negresses were watering the flower-beds; they carried the watering-cans on their heads until they found the particular plant they wished to sprinkle with the refreshing liquid. Their movements were slow and deliberate and very graceful.

It was a peaceful summer day; from where I sat I could see, afar off, a thin edge of blue beyond the distant confines of the town, and I made out the white patches of the sails of little vessels. I lit my pipe and waited. Suddenly there was a jangle and a crash, and a buggy stopped at the hotel door; in it the head of my friend Forrest appeared from amidst a heap of sketch-books, easels, portfolios, and virgin canvases. I could see by the agonised expression on his flushed countenance that he was very angry. I called the waiter and told him to help the poor struggling artist to disentangle himself from the debris of his paraphernalia.

Poor Forrest came to where I sat and sank into another wicker chair. He seized my cooling drink and emptied the glass at one gulp.

"Where am I?" he asked.

I shook my head.

The West Indies

"Where's Large and the Colonel?"

I shook my head.

"Seen my luggage?"

I shook my head again.

He glanced through the doorway and caught sight of the disreputable John crow perched on the bank of scarlet blossoms, and, fumbling for a pencil, made his first Jamaican sketch there and then. I ordered another cooling drink, and so we waited for our luggage and our friends.

Jamaica is the largest and most important island in the British West Indies. It contains an area of some two thousand odd square miles, and supports a population of three quarters of a million people, only two per cent of whom are white. The blacks claim the predominating proportion of seventy-seven per cent, the "coloured" people represent nearly twenty per cent, and the remainder of the population is made up of whites, Indian coolies, and Chinese. The ten thousand coolies at work on the plantations in the interior have become a force in the island, and they are destined to play a considerable part in the commercial salvation of the country. The negroes are, of course, the descend-

Jamaica

In the days of old, Jamaica waxed fat on the profits of her sugar estates and the rich prizes of her rum trade. Fortunes were made almost without effort or exertion by old-time planters. Sugar was sold at absurdly high prices, and the planters cultivated their plantations entirely by slave labour.

The Emancipation Act of 1834 flung the industries of the island out of joint, and although the Imperial Government granted compensation to the extent of nearly six millions sterling to the owners of the three hundred thousand slaves they had liberated, the dry rot of decay set in, and Jamaica fell from her high position among commercial communities. The richest planters sold out their plantations and returned to the old country; the poorer planters who remained in the island were terribly handicapped for lack of labour. The freed slaves refused to work for their late masters, and the labour difficulty set in. Factories were forced to stop work; fields lay unplanted and untended for lack of workers. And this labour difficulty has remained more or less acute from that day to this. It was believed by the authorities that the introduction of the ten thousand coolies would help to solve the difficulty. The negroes had built for themselves little huts, and were content to live on the native fruits and vegetables. The pleasant indolence of their new life suited their tastes to a nicety; the rewards offered in return for their labour were neither sufficient nor in any way attractive. The warm climate and rich soil were all the Jamaican African required to make

his life all that he desired. Sugar plantations were abandoned and rum factories were shut down, and poverty came to the land of wood and water. Naturally the white people resented the idleness of the blacks, and several eruptions occurred; the Gordon riots, and other disturbances less notorious, were directly caused by the impatience of the whites and the impertinence of the blacks.

Fine as is the picture of those three hundred thousand Africans climbing the mountain sides of their island prison-home in order that they might face the sun on the morning of the emancipation, we must not ignore the prospect of the valleys, lying in the deep shadows of those mountains, which were to be half desolated by the glory of that sunrise. If the black men were willing to work as hard now, or even half as hard, as their fathers once were forced to work, we should hear no dreary stories of Jamaica's poverty. The island has got an ideal climate, a marvellously productive soil, and labourers in plenty; it lacks but the spirit of labour. The natural wealth of the country is vast enough, but the harvesters are idle and unwilling to work. The fact that the Government was forced to bring ten

A NEGRO

Jamaica

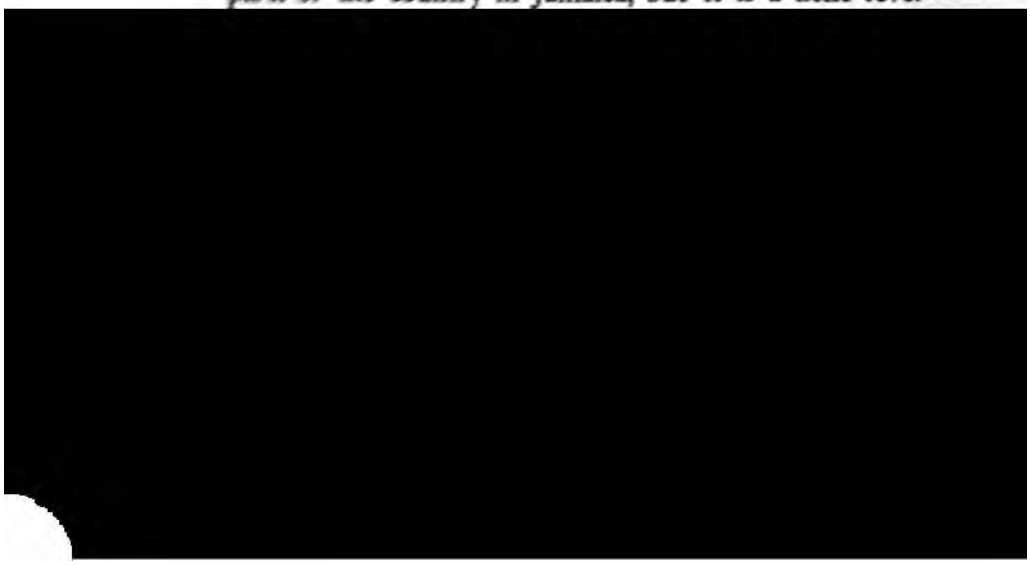
Solve the Jamaica labour problem and the commercial problem will solve itself.

The climate of the island is as nearly perfect as any climate can hope to be. It is a country of perpetual sunshine and blue skies. The heat of the day is tropical, but it is always tempered by cool sea breezes; and when the sun has gone the evenings and the nights are deliciously cool and refreshing. The island is really possessed of many different climates. The towns and villages among the hills on the mountain slopes are always cooler than the cities of the plains. The climate of the place has always been grossly maligned by people of the homeland. On my first journey out to Jamaica I imagined that I should find the place filled with yellow fever and malaria ; I thought of it as a sort of West Africa—only a little worse. And I found it the most pleasant and healthy place imaginable. In spite of all the statements and statistics to the contrary, the conservative people of England still believe that a journey to the Queen of the Antilles includes the risk of yellow jack. Fevers there are, of course, just as in England there are coughs and colds ; and I would choose a Jamaica fever before an English cold. Yellow fever is a disease which attacks you when you least expect it, and leaves you quite dead, or nearly so. It is an uncanny, unwholesome thing, and is not a respecter of persons. Really, for all practical purposes, Jamaica is free of yellow fever ; the disease has been stamped out. People die of it even to this date ; but even England is not entirely free from smallpox.

Yet one cannot describe smallpox as one of the characteristics of our little island. In the same way it would be foolish to associate Jamaica with yellow fever.

The Jamaicans discuss the disease with dispassionate, respectful dread. It is a thing to be avoided; if met face to face it must be combated with heroism, and a particular remedy peculiar almost to every inhabitant. Many there are alive on the island who have had the yellow jack and lived; many more there are who still mourn the loss of those who bowed before its malignant power. The younger colonists—those people who have lived there only ten or fifteen or twenty years—talk of the '97 outbreak; the old inhabitants speak of the last real epidemic, the '77 affair. So and so went down then, and poor old what's-his-name died in two hours. I met one man who told me of a picnic he gave in the mountains some seven years ago. Sixteen guests sat down; eight died of yellow fever before the year closed down. That would be in the '97 outbreak. But these are rare cases.

Malarial fever is common in the towns and some parts of the country in Jamaica, but it is a little fever

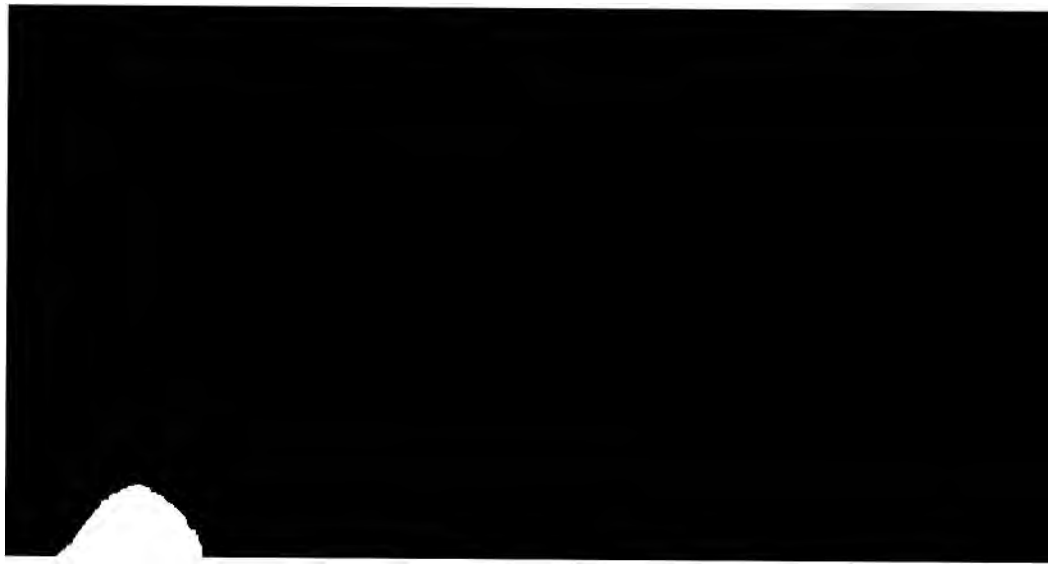


and habits admirably adapted for the English climate are generally out of place in a tropical island.

The staple products of the island are entirely agricultural. Jamaica has embraced the fruit trade. Half the total value of her exports is represented by her over-sea trade in bananas, oranges, grape fruit, and pine-apples. The sugar and rum trades take secondary positions, but coffee is rapidly coming to the front.

To-day the island has little political significance save for the fact that it is a strong naval base. It is probable that the completion of the Panama Canal will give to it a more important status in the political world. With the opening of the new ocean route to the East, Jamaica will become a naval base of the utmost importance to Britain.

A STREET IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA



THE TOWN OF KINGSTON

CHAPTER III

THE TOWN OF KINGSTON

THE town of Kingston is made up of mean streets crammed with little bungalow houses, filled to overflowing with people coloured in all the shades of black and yellow. If the place resembles any well-known capital it must be New York ; but a New York built by children in doll's-house style, and painted green and white. In the manner of New York the streets stretch to the wharves and quays of the giant harbour, and electric tram-cars clang along the busy roads by day and night. Electric poles stick up along the roadway in blatant disregard of the finer feelings of romantic tourists. The shops are usually called emporiums, and they flash with all the gaudy fitments common to the meaner streets of New York city. Some there are that might be English—quiet and respectable places in which the white man finds his needs supplied by intelligent half-breeds, who do not count themselves among the coloured class. These aristocrats among Jamaica's shop assistants have all the polish of a London draper, mixed with an obvious consciousness of vast

responsibility. As a rule he affects gold spectacles, and closely resembles an Indian Babu studying law. With this class of salesman it is impossible to exercise one's powers of bargaining. The suggestion of a reduction in the price of a linen collar would be to these commercial gentlemen entirely in the nature of an insult. They do not live to amass money. Their mission is to supply Jamaican Englishmen with necessary comforts at the lowest possible price; there is no suggestion of gain in their commerce. Homilies on the ethics of tradesmanship, delivered with great eloquence and a religious accent from behind a dark face screened with gold spectacles, are impressive in the extreme. The real salesman is to be found in smaller stores. There the tradesman regards as a man without wisdom the dull buyer who pays more than half the sum asked for any article. It is on such that the people wax fat in the land. This acute process of buying is tedious if the buyer lacks experience. The easiest method is to offer the merchant just one quarter the sum asked for any article. This gives the keeper of the shop a shock, but impresses him with the fact that he is not likely to be able to swindle you to an unlimited extent. It has

AN OLD GATEWAY, KINGSTON

sweetmeats or sweating pastries along the kerb-stones, do not appeal to the adult of the race of England. Such sellers are the native costermongers. They have no barrows or elaborate stalls; their paraphernalia consists of a broken basket, or piece of board supported across the knees. They are the sellers of fruit, sweetmeats, tobacco, eggs, live poultry, and the sticky, greasy pastries dear to the heart of the negro, be he old or young. As a rule the basket stalls are placed at the roadside, well in the glare of the sun. The saleswoman is usually very old, and her costume is of dull rags constructed to resemble a lady's dress. Her face is creased at the jaws, and the cheek bones stand out like gnarled fists; her remaining teeth are very yellow, and her skinny hands are for ever shuffling the contents of her basket. Such women make no bid for trade; the buyer comes or he comes not. The dull face shows no emotion. It may be that the basket and its contents are the property of a negro speculator; she, the seller, perhaps, is simply an agent working for her daily yam. These are not the merry women of the market-place who come in from the country with a load of produce to sell and to spend a day in town. If it were not for the sweetmeats they would pass as ancient beggars. Of course Kingston has its gamin—the wild, bareheaded, barelegged boy, who is always shouting or running or playing his mysterious games of the streets. He, of course, is the essence of youthful happiness. His day is divided between the harbour, where he dives for pennies among the sharks alongside ocean-going passenger

boats, and the streets, where he is prepared for anything, from stealing a water melon to chasing the donkeys of the market-place. When a stranger accosts him he becomes all grinning innocence and flashing teeth. "Me work, sah, yes, sah, very hard work, very little money. I ask you for a penny, sah, for my mother's sake, sah, one penny." It seems to me that every boy, be he black or white, or yellow or red, whether he live in London, Paris, Tokio, or Kingston, Jamaica, is afflicted with the same genius of mischief.

The capital of Jamaica has its pest also. In most places frequented by tourists the great pest is the guide pest; in Jamaica it is the buggyman. The buggy, of course, is the cab of the Indies, and the buggyman is the curse of the country. With him we will deal at length elsewhere. But the buggies and the buggyman should always be considered as the Jamaican pests.

It is curious to see the long electric Canadian road car swing at ten-mile speed down these narrow streets crowded with the picturesque people of the Western Indies. The effect of the streets is kaleidoscopic; the sudden appearance of a car reminds one of the mutoscope which shows a railway train rushing at the

walking. The market baskets may be placed beneath the seats; the town slips rapidly behind, and home is reached. Heaven knows what moves the car along. There are no horses, and no engines like those on the railway. It is a thing causing annoyance to the buggyman, that is all. For the rest you can ride five or six miles at ten miles an hour speed for four Jamaican pennies.

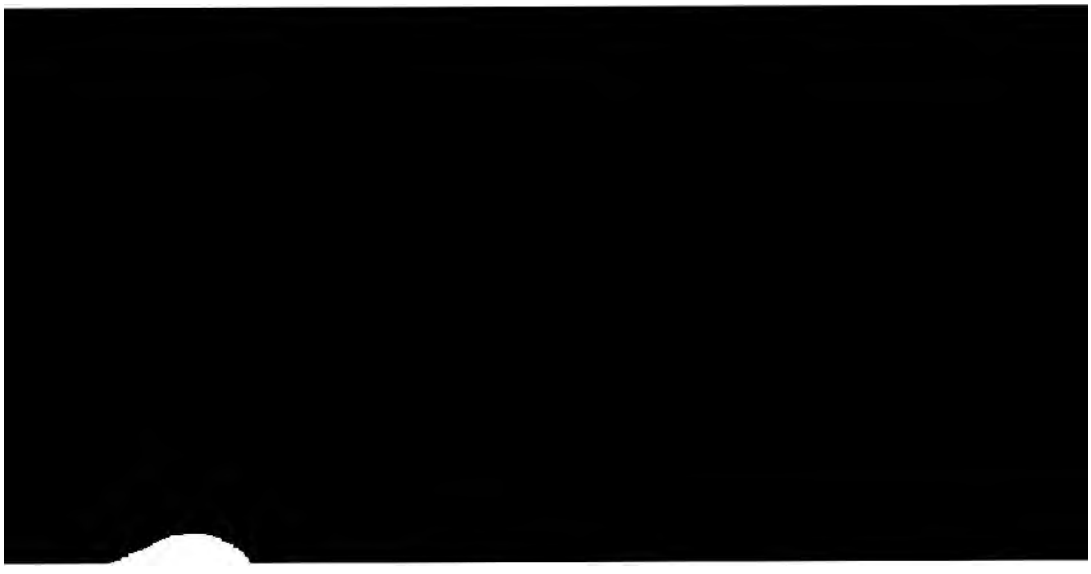
The country-people, who come once a week to sell their produce in the great Saturday foregathering of agricultural Jamaica, still show wonder and fear at the approach of a tram. They still jump into the hedges as the tram flies along—still turn their eyes away from the chaff of the negro conductor. But that is the only respect shown to this foreign importation.

The dusty streets of the capital melt into country lanes with scented hedges as you swing out of the city on a journey to the Constant Spring terminus of the tramway. White dust takes the place of the darker city dust. The scent of half the flowers of the world crush out the musty odour of crowded alleys, always stewing beneath a tropic sun. That is the great charm of the tramway, the only real excuse for its existence. By it you can rush out of evil town-life into the sweetness of the most beautiful country in the world. To see a high range of purple mountains, fronted by heavy fields of banana trees and towering pines, and brilliant flowers of every tint and shade and shape—to see all these from the seat of a tram car which might just as well be taking you from Shepherd's Bush to Kew, is a

thing every one should experience. The attitude of the native to the cars is representative of ingrained indifference to everything.

Of all places in and about Kingston, the market-place is the most fascinating. Really there are two buildings —two groups of compact sheds, walled in and guarded by lazy constables of justice. They are distant from each other to the extent of about half a mile, but the road which links the one to the other is, on market days, just as busy a place as either building. So it is easier to count both buildings and roadway one long market. And it is better to trade in the open highway than it is to haggle with women in a crowded building reeking with strong smells of fruit and fowls and vegetables, musty basket-work, decomposing meat, and a few hundred healthy negroes. Of course it is necessary that we should go the round of the covered stalls and stand the cross-fire of two rows of anxious saleswomen, whose lung power is of artillery force. After the first ten yards of the passage any ordinary Englishman has lost his power of blushing. The blandishments of the women are crude and full of personalities. One calls you a pretty English gentleman,

A FRUIT-SELLER ON A SIDE-WALK, KINGSTON



the wit of three hundred women. Soon you find your utter abandon and exchange compliments. The negro woman respects a white man who has no reserve. At one stall you will find all the fruits of the Indies: succulent mangoes, golden grape fruit, oranges, bananas, guavas, nazeberries, pine-apples, and a half hundred others. The combined force of all the smells is terrific. Next, an aged basket-woman displays examples of the only real art-work produced by the West Indian negroes. The baskets are really good. You can buy one of any shape, any size, and any and every design. Coloured grass is let into snow-white reed with fine cunning, and without regard for any canon of conventionality. The character of the casual negroes is shown in the patterns of their basket-work. All the younger women are told off to superintend the stalls which cater to the weaknesses of tourists. The women are given silver ornaments to wear on their coal black wrists, and frequently their ears are hung with heavy Eastern rings. This is a fashion copied from the coolie women. All the woman's personal jewellery is offered for sale. She will explain the meaning of the most complicated article of native manufactures with cheerful languor. She assumes an air of indifference so long as she knows you intend to buy. When you begin to show indifference, the instinct of the saleswoman springs to life in her, and she is all entreaty. She offers wonderful whips made from the lace bark tree, whips whose butt and long plaited lash are both made from one piece of wood. She offers walking sticks of ebony,

groo groo palm, pimento, bamboo, or cinnamon. Or if you prefer it, you can purchase a shark's backbone mounted on a steel rod and fitted with a handle of scented sandal wood. This, the lady will tell you, is in England a great novelty, and surely worth five little dollars. Of course there is basket-work, and some pottery shaped out of red Caribbean clay. There are strings of coloured seeds and flower-pots made from wide bamboos. Gourds are carved and coloured and cut into useless shapes alleged to be ornamental, and cocoa-nuts are carved into men's heads, the red hair left to make a frizzy beard. These, the lady says, are very fine There are little gourds set on wooden skewers, and so formed into babies' rattles. These the arch maiden sells to young men and maidens. Last of all, she produces dainty d'oyleys and table-centres and fine ornaments made from the lace bark-tree, and fashioned with ferns and pressed blossoms. These things cost a great deal of money, but as a rule they are very decorative. When you leave her stall, the lady pursues you for many yards with a mammoth lamp-shade, which, she assures you, will be greatly appreciated by your home folks.

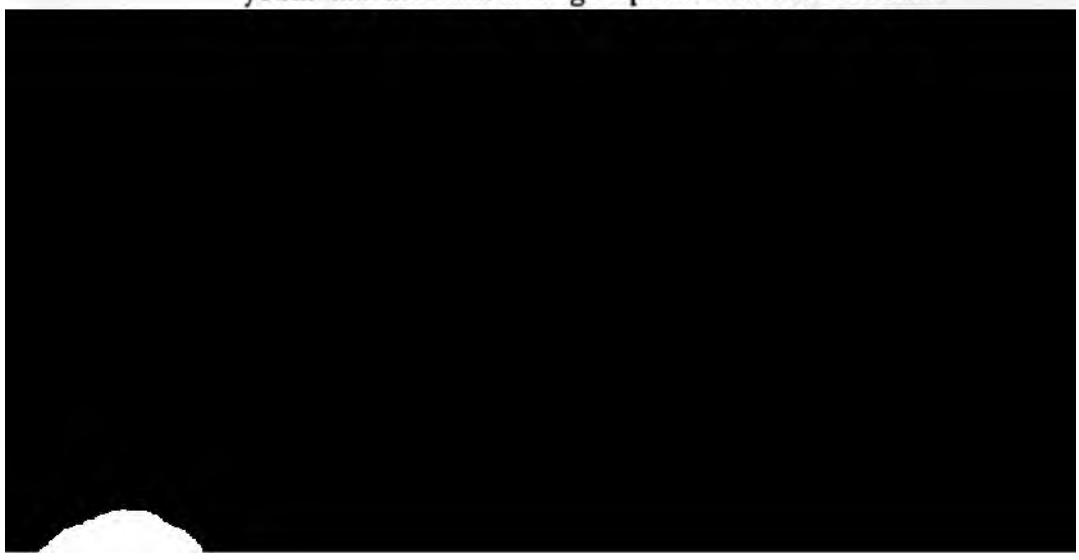
reason I could not discover. It is in this corner of the market-place that one meets the negro only. The woman minds the stall and does the selling, while the husband gossips with his fellows, or sips strong liquids at the rum bars. The anxious wife squats, nigger fashion, beside her heap of pepper-pods, and her hands play with them listlessly, just as we imagine a miser plays with his gold, until the heap is sold. She is patient and ladylike. The white man walks along her strip of market land, and she voices no light banter. If you ask questions as to her wares she answers with modesty and with intelligence. This is the country-woman, polite and unsophisticated. Beyond the department devoted to the sale of spices and pepper-pods and tobacco, we come to the chicken saleroom. Jamaican market-women nurse captive fowls just in the same manner as Englishwomen fondle lap-dogs. They stroke them and play with their feathers, open a wing to show the strength and youth of a bird, and hold the beak towards their face as if pleading with the doomed fowls for farewell kisses.

Fronting the poultry-women are the sellers of native vegetables and fruits. These wares are heaped on strips of torn sacking spread upon the stone floor of the market. Each woman sits next her piece of sacking and noisily shouts the merits of her own particular goods. When no customers are about, these women are content to wrangle among themselves as to the comparative merits of rival heaps of fruit; from commercial squabbles of this description it is easy for the conversa-

tion to descend to the level of vulgar personalities and strong abuse.

The meat market is the only selling place which offers no attraction to the idle lounger. For myself I was content to smell it afar off and pass quickly by. Opposite the main entrance to the principal building is the market courtyard, a square patch of grey dust enclosed by an iron railing, and containing a drinking fountain for the people and a long water-filled trough for the donkeys. This is the resting-place for the workers and idling-place for the idlers. Littered about the dust are groups of children, and donkeys, and adults. The children are playing their games, the donkeys are munching at heaps of half-dried green grass, and the adults, stretched at full length on the dust, or on the grass heaps at which the donkeys are taking their meal, are for the most part sleeping the sleep of the tired negro. A few there are who have chosen to lie in the shadow of empty market carts, but more are to be found sleeping in the full glare of the sun.

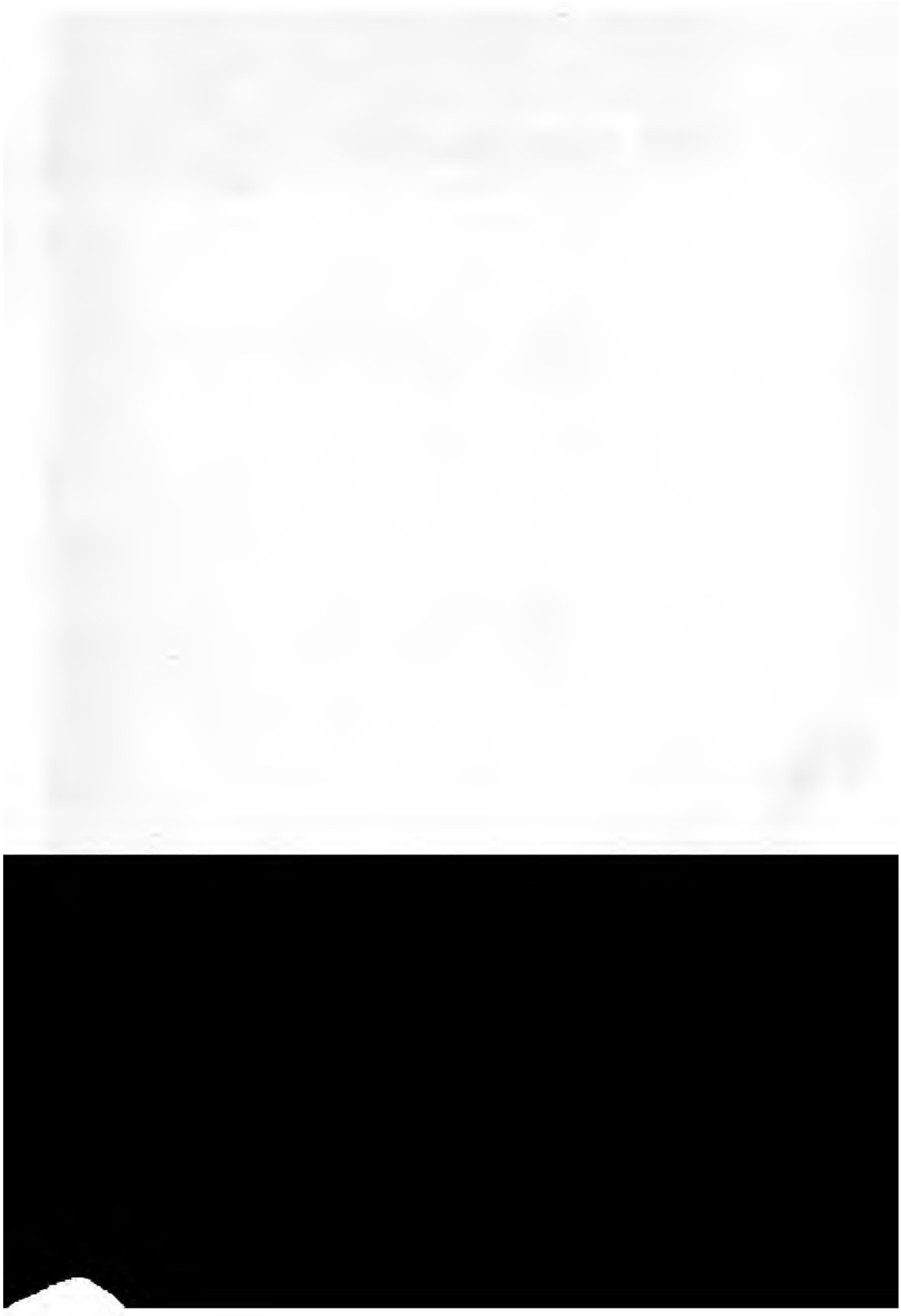
The fountain in the centre of the courtyard is the drawing-room of the market place. Here come the youth and the maiden to gossip and flirt over the mid-



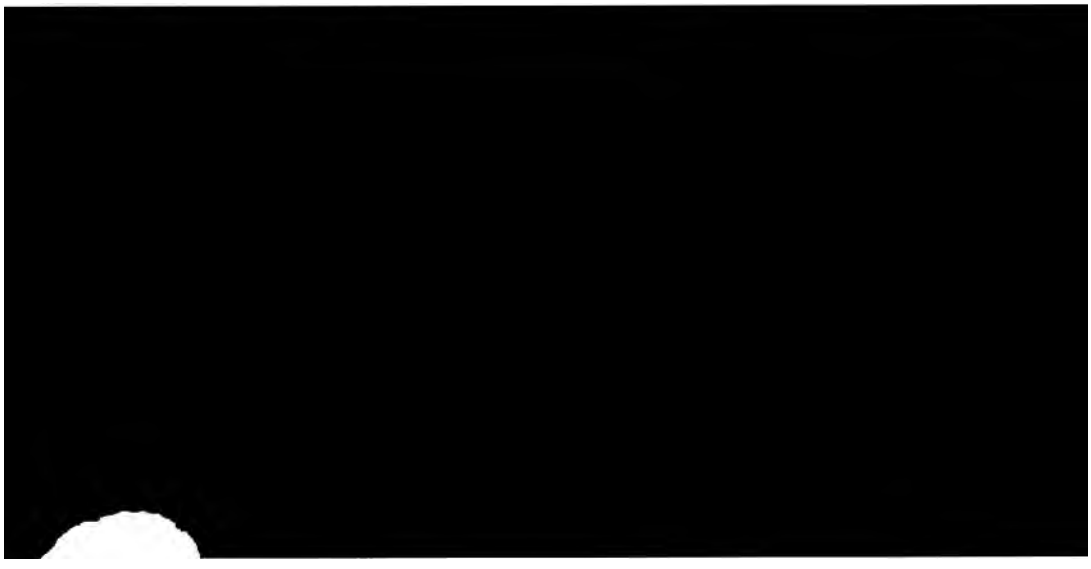
THE TOBACCO MARKET, KINGSTON

heavy tide breaking over a pebbly beach. And the place is filled with grey dust-clouds as the people pass and repass, moving from the fountain to make way for new-comers. The blackness of their bare legs is hidden by the dirty grey dust. No matter how supple or glossy the skin may really be, two minutes' walking in the courtyard gives bare legs the appearance of age, and suggests the existence of loathsome disease. The grey dust rises up and powders the women's hair until the black curls are lightened to the colour of brown pepper. In fact the unpleasant dust envelopes everything under a cloud of unclean greyness. In the courtyard of the market-place the black people seem grey and diseased; the white folk never pass beyond the entrance gate.

It is on market days that one can see in the Kingston high roads, and in the suburban lanes, groups of country women walking beneath heavy head-loads of garden produce. In all the world there is nothing more graceful than the carriage of a negro woman swinging along, with free and easy motion, under a head-load which would be heavy to an ordinary white man. With head erect, straight neck, chest flung forward, and arms swinging with unconscious freedom, the women present perfect examples of graceful strength. Their stride is long, and easy, and very regular. They are the most graceful walkers in the world. I have never seen a lady in Europe with a carriage as perfect as that of the ordinary Jamaica negro market-woman.



A MARKET WOMAN, JAMAICA



THE PEOPLE OF JAMAICA

CHAPTER IV

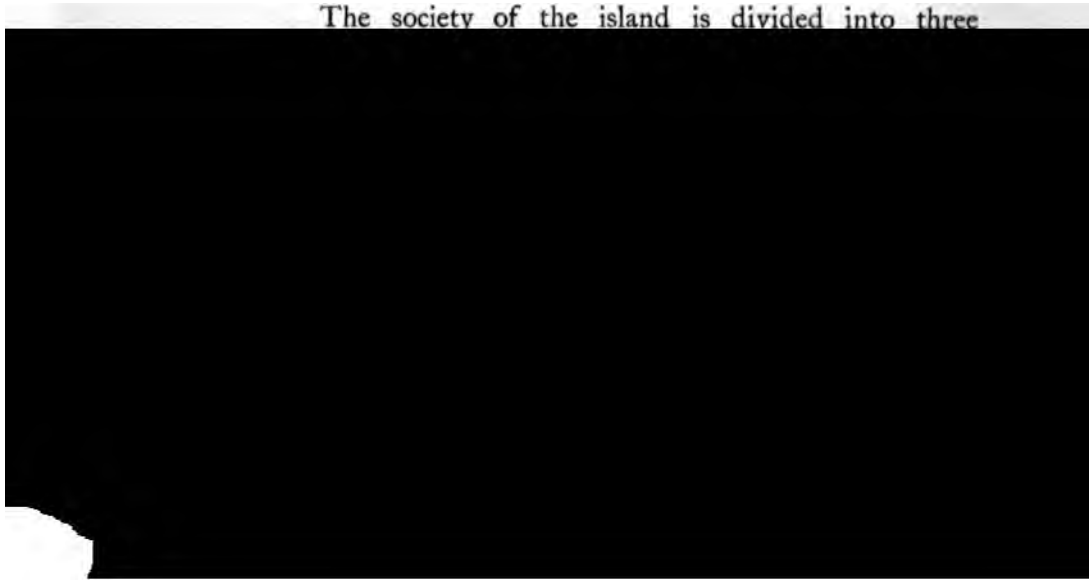
THE PEOPLE OF JAMAICA

At one time Jamaica was peopled by a race of red men whose beauty and timidity were the wonder and convenience of the little band of Europeans who were the first whites to tread the fragrant shores of the Pearl of the Antilles. To-day not a trace of these Caribs remains. Unfit for competition with the strenuous white or muscular black, the race, so far as Jamaica is concerned, has run its course. The red people are remembered only by the stone implements and rude pottery preserved in the Jamaican museum. Nowadays the island is peopled by whites—English, American, and those of Spanish blood; blacks—grandchildren of the slaves imported from West and West Central Africa; and half-breeds—yellow and brown people—the descendants of those intrigues of the white man and his black servant which, not many years back, were common among the people of the country.

The white man needs but little description; you can see him in England or in any colony: an Englishman who takes his cold bath, and considers himself not the least

important member of the most important race extant. His arrogance is undiminished by the tropic sun, though his habits of life may have become West Indianised. He rises at six and breakfasts at ten or eleven, lunches at two or three, and dines at seven. His food is as it is in England, save that fruit and vegetables are more plentiful. His house is built bungalow fashion, and his servants (with whom he has more trouble than his brethren in London) are blacker than the blackest hat. His complexion is either white with a yellowish tinge, or red mahogany. His women-folk dress in the latest Parisian creations, and suffer only from lack of exercise. It is not a climate for exertion, and the English lady goes to the length of taking none at all. She crosses the street in her buggy, and has a black maid to hand, so that she may never be called upon to make any unnecessary movement. The man has his polo, and tennis, and pigeon-shooting, his saddle-horse, and golf. If he is very brave and a great enthusiast, there is the cricket field. The lady always prefers the unhealthy luxury of repose. So her face is milk-coloured ; she is whiter than her husband.

The society of the island is divided into three



AN OLD WOMAN

man differs from that of the Anglo-Indian at a hill station; it is not the same as the life in a provincial town. But somehow it is a strange mixture of these two, except that in the social life the bachelor plays but a puny part. Not many mothers take their daughters to Jamaica, so, in the capital, the bachelor lives in one of the hotels and plays billiards in the evenings. It would be a blessing to the single men if a few enterprising mothers with many daughters would take up their abode in some of the charming villa residences a few miles out of Kingston.

The life of the Jamaica negro is almost ideal. As a rule he either entirely ignores the little work he ought to do, or leaves it to the exhaustless energy of his indefatigable wife. He spends his life in shady parts of the market-place, or lolls in the sun outside the place of his abode. Nothing worries him. He is imperturbable; glorious in his idleness, happy in a blissful ignorance which takes no account of yesterday or to-morrow. His only grievance, if he has one, is the limited working power of one woman. Happy is the man who is the father of many able-bodied youngsters. If by some mischance—the accident of domestic misfortune, or the promptings of *ennui* born of inaction—he is forced to work, he works with cheerfulness, and with a happy grin complains through the day, and then spends his night in revelry. When you have questioned one black man as to the extent and remuneration of his labour, you have interviewed the island. The temperament of the negro is inborn; it never varies; all negroes are

blood brethren. Ask any man if he works hard and you will hear—

"Yes, me work very hard, sah."

"You look well on it."

"No, me no well, sah; me not fit for work; too sick."

"But you get well paid."

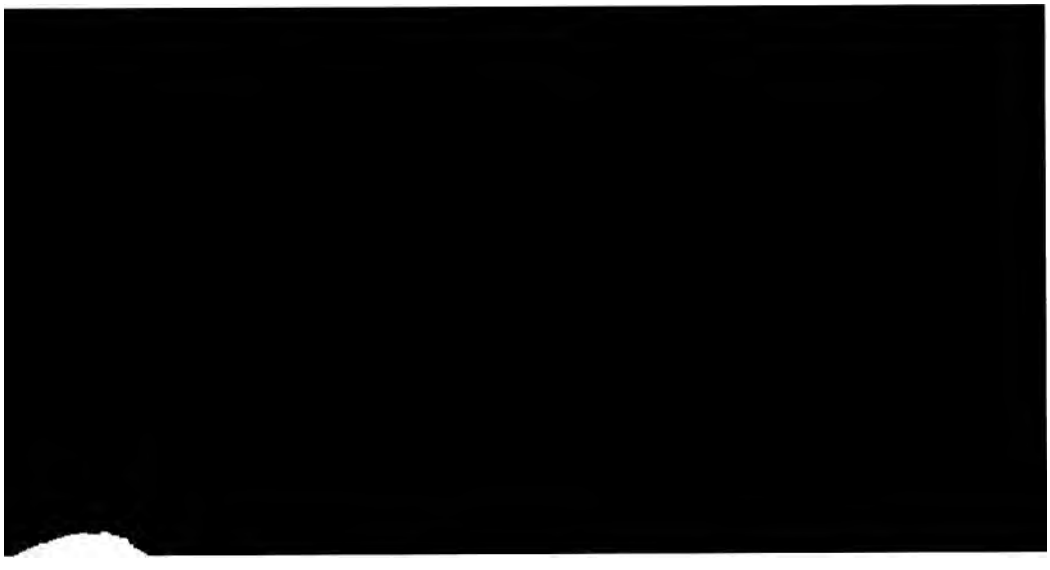
"No well paid, sah. Plenty work; very little money, sah."

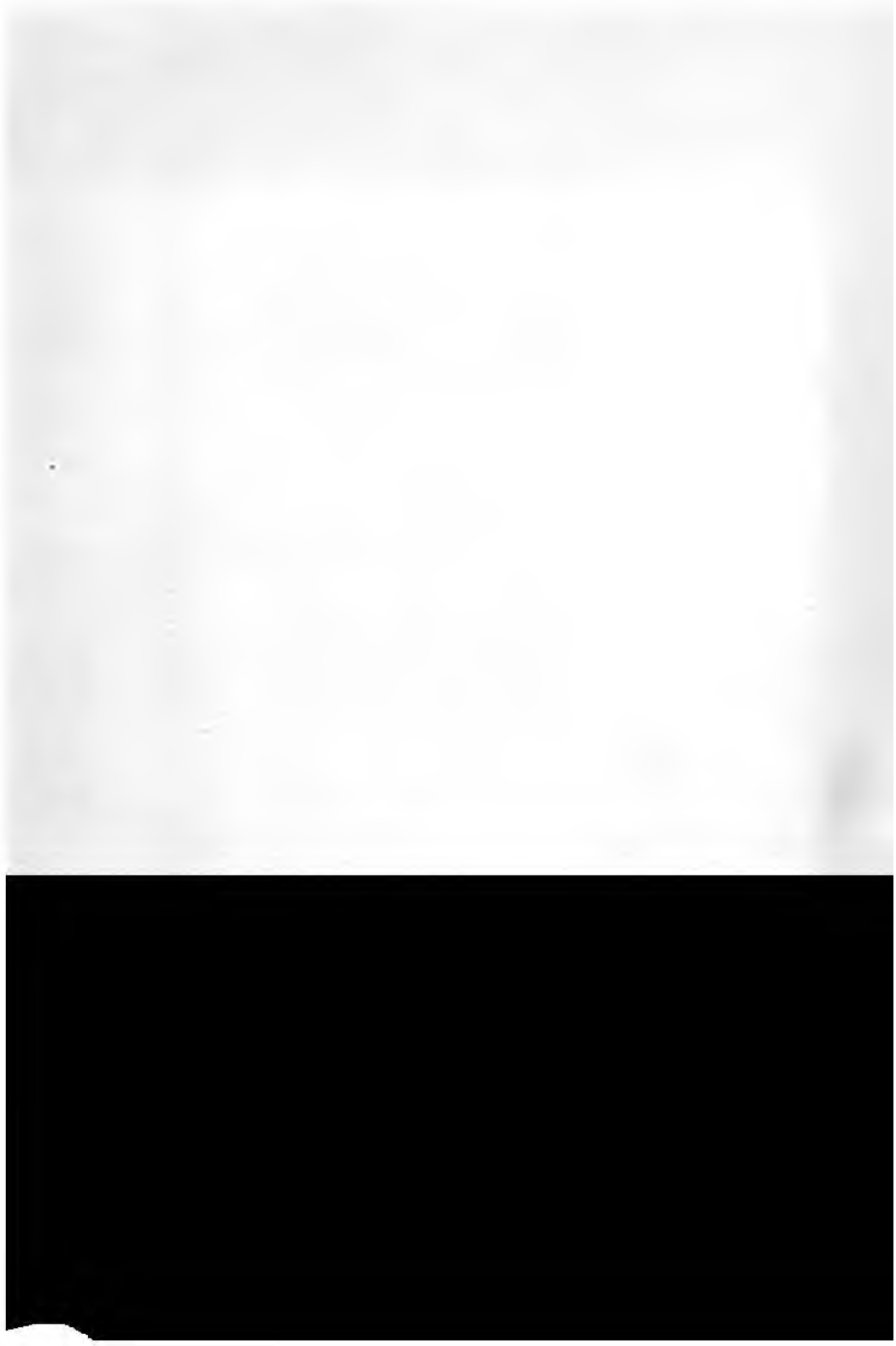
All this with a satisfied grin except when he describes the weakness of his health; then his eyes roll and his face clouds in a manner almost convincing to new arrivals.

With the women it is different. They have no time for conversation with idle strangers; they work with unceasing energy. If they pause, it is only to stare with an air of half-timid wonder, or to break into long peals of boisterous laughter. If it were not for the women folk, Jamaica would indeed be hard put to it for workers.

In character the Jamaican negroes are a mixture of good and bad; of Africa and Europe, with the vices of both the blacks and the whites, and only some of the

COCOANUT PALMS, FALMOUTH, JAMAICA

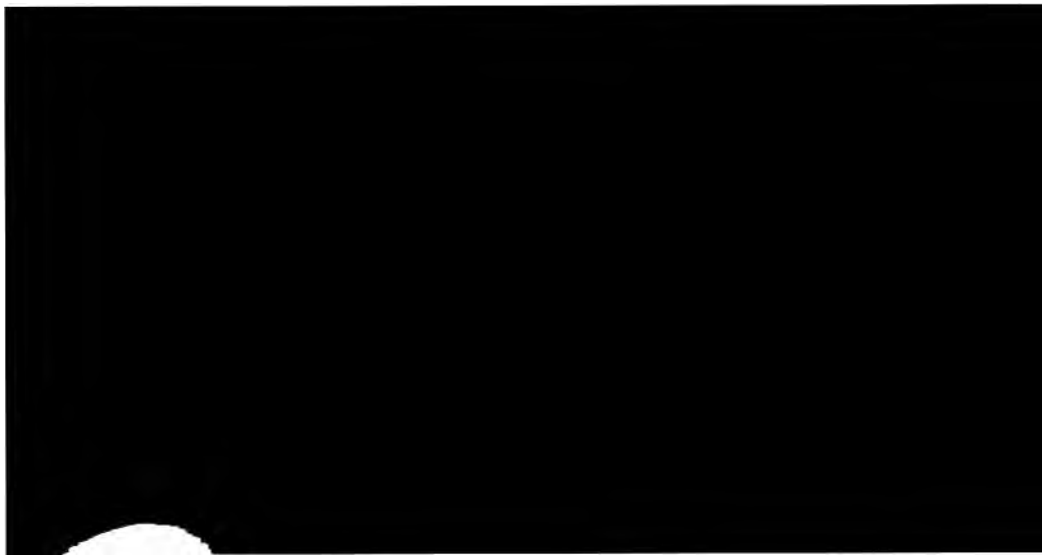


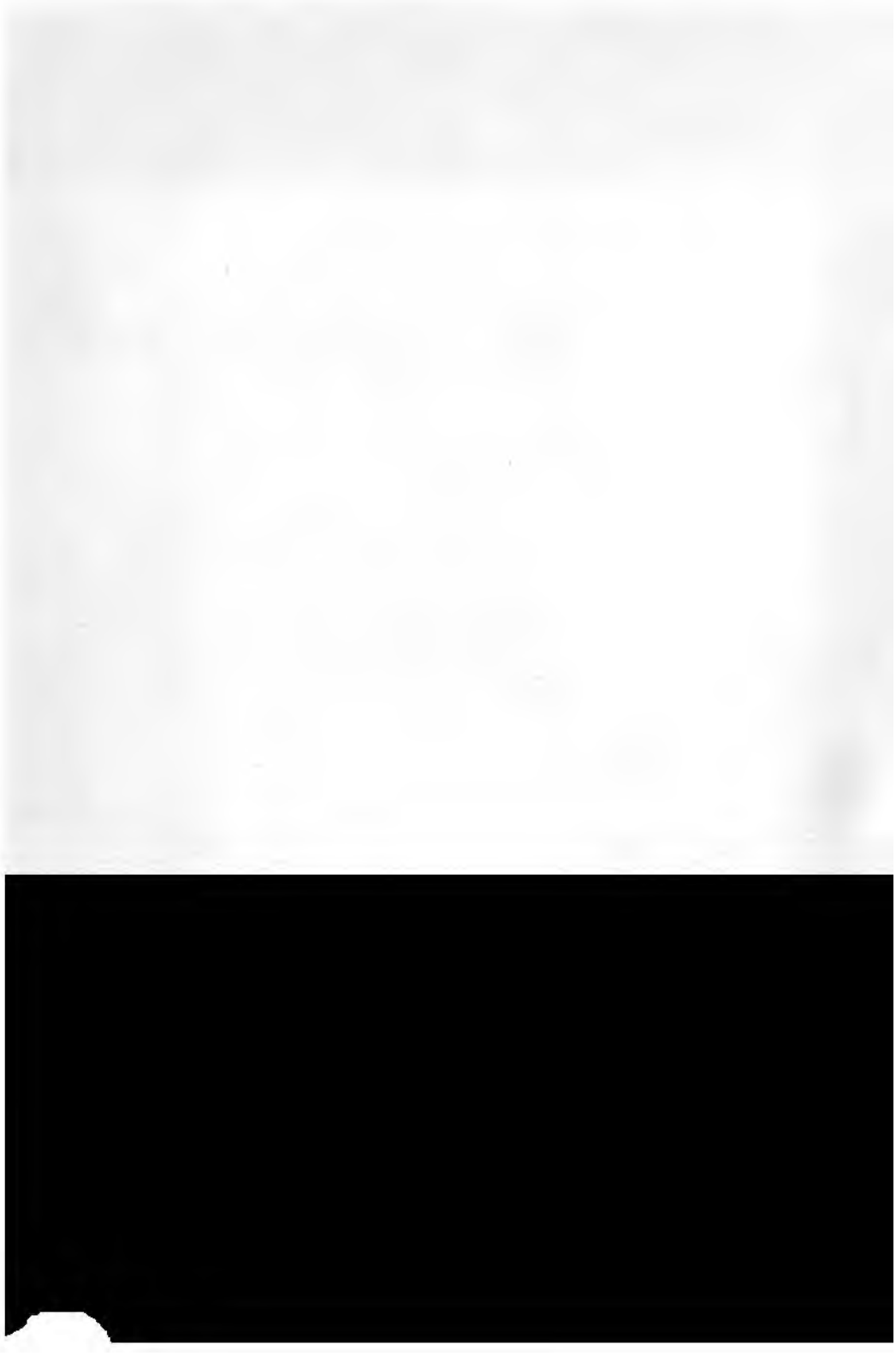


it is difficult for the white man to be in entire sympathy. The ideas of a black man are different from those of white. He sees things from a different point of view, and cannot really be happy with a white, who, legally his equal, is actually in many ways infinitely his superior. In many ways the Jamaican native resembles his coloured brother of the American States; he is just as arrogant —even more so—but he is not quite so really independent, and by no means so energetic. It is certainly a fact that the Jamaican negroes are the happiest, relatively the richest, and quite the most comfortable inhabitants of the globe. Though there may be poverty among them, there is no unsatisfied hunger. The fields and the hedges, as well as the market-places, afford food and comfort for the dweller in this land of perpetual sun. Clothes they have in too great an abundance. It is only for the purposes of pride and vainglory that clothes are worn at all. The climate is warm enough to justify nudity, and although this happy condition of freedom is not compatible with the canons of modern society, it is easily possible for a native to be clad and outwardly furnished for a very few shillings per annum. Overcoats are unknown. Coals are only associated with the steamships in Kingston Harbour, and the railway. Meat is an unnecessary luxury—almost an unhealthy one. The people live on fruit and vegetables, with an occasional dish of salt fish caught in the rivers or from the waters of the Caribbean Sea, and cured with a total disregard for delicate sweetness. At the first and the twenty-first glance, the

European would pronounce the dried fish of the Jamaican nigger bad, if not entirely putrid. The popularity of this form of diet among the people is evidence of the over-sensitiveness of the civilised nose. The West Indian soldier of the line receives full rations as well as his shilling a day. The meat he receives from a beneficent Government is the same as that served out to his English brother-in-arms, and it is from this source that the old English settler draws the supply of fresh meat for his own table. It is better to go among the West Indian messrooms and buy the soldiers' meat rations than it is to chance the tenderness of the joints on the market butcher's slabs. By a little enterprise and a good deal of bargaining with a coal-black mess sergeant, you are certain of obtaining the juiciest steak to be found on the island; and in doing so you materially add to the popularity of the army among possible recruits by enlarging the pocket-money of the black soldiers of the line. Our West Indian Tommies prefer the saltest of stale salt-fish to the juiciest of fresh juicy-steaks, and as a rule the officer of the day is quite prepared to wink at a little irregularity which makes for the happiness of his men and the comfort of the island.

A MILKMAID, BARBADOES.





two classes: those who live in the towns, and the country labourers. The two classes differ as much as do English agriculturists and Londoners. In Jamaica the country people are superior to the town-bred class. The influences of town life are not good for emotional people whose fathers' fathers hunted men in the forest lands of Western Africa. They receive impressions too easily. They are impressed by the bad as well as by the good. A black servant is always his own idea of his white master. A black man must imitate; his race has only just come in contact with civilisation. Instinctively he imitates because he has not yet reached that state which some day may enable him to initiate. If he is to appear in the guise of a civilised man he must follow; his experience is not great enough to enable him to lead; his instincts are still African and barbarian. So the town man, subject to the influences of a city in which live types of every class of every European race, is necessarily at a disadvantage compared with the man who lives with nature among people of his own colour and only one or two white men of one race.

The dwellers in the Jamaican cities look down upon the country folk as unsophisticated nonentities. The country people imagine the townsmen to be priests of iniquity, cunning, and steeped in wickedness. Just as it is in England, only more so. In the country all the coloured people are, approximately, of one class; they all belong to one station. In towns the buggyman looks down upon the costermonger as an inferior, just as the wives of shopkeepers ignore the existence of Mrs.

Buggyman. In imitation of the English, foolish class distinction has given birth to a form of snobbishness which is entirely ludicrous. In Kingston the outward and visible sign of prosperity or social superiority is shown in the costume of the women-folk, and in the simpering accent of the maidens. The more uncomfortable a woman looks when she goes on church parade, the more diffidence she shows before opening her mouth to answer a simple question, the higher she is in the social scale, as it is understood by native Jamaicans. This is as it is among the shopkeepers and the proprietors of buggy horses and worn-out four-wheel tourist conveyances. With the workers it is altogether different. The aged lady, who sits for twelve hours of every day selling gingerbread beneath the half-shade of a decaying arch fronting an important shop in the main street, thinks little of costume and nothing of accent. She is persuaded to talk with great difficulty, though her story would be really interesting. An old black lady lacks that venerable appearance peculiar to the aged dames of England. She does not appear too clean, her hair is reduced to mangy patches of dusty black curls, showing here and there on the top

cake beneath the half-shade of decaying archways. No one ever seems to buy her dainties, but there she sits all day long staring vacantly into nothing. Occasionally she fingers her cakes, and the movement of her hands disturbs a cloud of flies who claim her cookies as their own. She is listless and entirely dumb; there is no crowd of chattering loafers round her stall, no group of children playing hide-and-seek under the shadow of her protection. She is alone—a picture of desolation. She will sit there gazing at nothing, heeding nothing, until she finds the consolation of the sleep of death. As a conversationalist she is quite impossible. If a white man stops to give her greeting, she replies not by word of mouth, but with an out-thrust hand. She has money greed. Half her day is spent in silent pleading for alms. Altogether she is not picturesque; she lacks the elements of cleanliness, and her cookies are not wholesome. She is something to pass by with a shudder—a human being of the lowest species undergoing a very slow process of decay. If she has intelligence, it is hidden with her life-story behind the shrunken eyes half-hidden by the dull-red rims and hanging skin.

The most obvious inhabitants of Kingston are the drivers of the buggies. A Jamaican buggy is a spider-like species of the four-wheeled vehicle, known in England as the country fly. It is drawn by one horse, which is neither a horse, nor a pony, nor a mule, but something remotely resembling all these things, and raising sentiments of deep pity in the hearts of all beholders. The

driver of the buggy, the buggyman, supplies the necessary enthusiasm to the horse and buggy alike. One instinctively feels that but for the elevating spirit of sublime optimism which the buggyman possesses to the fullest degree, the poor horse would drop dead and the vehicle would fall to bits. The buggyman ignores everything in life save possible customers. If you hire a buggy you are the life and soul of the driver until you enter his crazy carriage; then you become as less than nothing, and the driver shamelessly bargains with pedestrians for the use of his coach when the time comes for you to leave. The buggymen know Kingston as well as the London cabby knows his London, and that is saying much. He drives with a rattling carelessness which is entirely good for weakly nerves. He ignores the protests of his nervous fare, and smiles in derision of the warning hand of an outraged police. He cannons other buggies as though they were billiard balls, and finally lands his victim, in a condition entirely demoralised and feverish, at a place where he has no desire to go. Then the driver blames the passenger for not giving correct directions, and explains that to drive on will be another sixpenny fare.

WAITING MAIDS

more than three weeks. These can be as easily sold as they can be purchased, and the possession of them saves the waste of much precious energy, and it is better for the language and morals of a vigorous person.

When he is not pursuing possible customers, the buggyman is asleep inside his carriage. His battered hat is carelessly balanced on the tip of his little nose, his feet are resting on the cushion of the front seat, his hands hanging limp, and he slumbers deeply, exhibiting the deep caverns of his mighty jaw. Flies settle and nest in his open mouth, children swarm round his buggy and tickle him with half-chewed sweetstuffs, women chaff him from the side walks, but he stirs not, not an eyelid moves. But let a tourist or a white man come within one hundred yards of him and he is alive again and in pursuit. He discovers a possible fare by the sense of smell. He is all eyes and ears and nose for white men. When he sleeps, his horse sleeps also. It is in many cases all the rest the poor beast hopes to get. It is usual for the poor beast to be dragged from his resting-place (it is neither stable, nor nest, nor open field) and harnessed at 8 A.M. He retires when the night is far spent, and the last straggler has settled beneath the mosquito netting of his bungalow bedroom. During the day he is driven to the full extent of his capabilities. He must always run his quickest. There are no words spoken to him: he is driven with the whip, and with the whip only. His food is coarse guinea-grass, and he is lucky if he finds much of that; his water comes should his journeying carry him

past a water tank. For all that, he has the heart and soul of a carriage horse, and he is as keen in his master's hunt for fares as a trained polo pony is in following the ball. In colour he is usually a bright yellowy red, with mane and tail of light yellow. He always shows his ribs, and the whip is pleasant to him because the lash disturbs the flies. He never falls or stumbles; he has learned to be sure of his feet by carrying tourists up high mountains by way of narrow winding paths. If he has one vice it is sleepiness, but in that matter he is well under the control of his driver.

When the buggy driver has finished his work he lolls about the drinking shops—an important man. He is the hardest drinker in Kingston. He mixes more with white men than do most of the other natives, and his calling puts him in touch with the doings of men of all types. He calls for his rum, and chaffs the barmaid, for all the world like a city clerk; and his conversation is of horse-racing and betting odds, and worse. He is well-to-do, and proud that the Government has sufficient confidence in his personal character and in his prowess as a coachman to entrust him with a license to

When a buggyman marries he usually chooses his wife from among the yellow women. The negress is beneath him. He likes to have as his wife a woman who may call herself white when she receives his guests or attends his chapel on the Sabbath. He will tell you that he married white, and you will wonder how he managed it, until you see his lady. If you are so inclined, you may abuse the driver and his wife and his children, his horse and his buggy, his incapacity and everything that is his. He will only laugh and crack his whip and sway about in his seat with merriment. He will do anything to please you, on the chance of your dealing generously with him when the time comes for payment. He is a thick-skinned black man. He has no delicacy, and no false pride, and little shame. This you will find out when you hand him your silver and tell him to be gone. Compared with him the London four-wheel cabby is an angel of mercy. The buggyman will abandon his horse and his buggy, and follow you down side streets, shouting that you have paid him too little. He will fling your silver to the ground and stamp on it. Then, picking it up, he will follow you shouting that you owe him money. No one heeds him. It is a common scene, and not worthy the attention of Jamaicans.

DIVING BOYS, KINGSTON

DIVING BOYS, KINGSTON

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A JAMAICAN GAMIN

CHAPTER V

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A JAMAICAN GAMIN

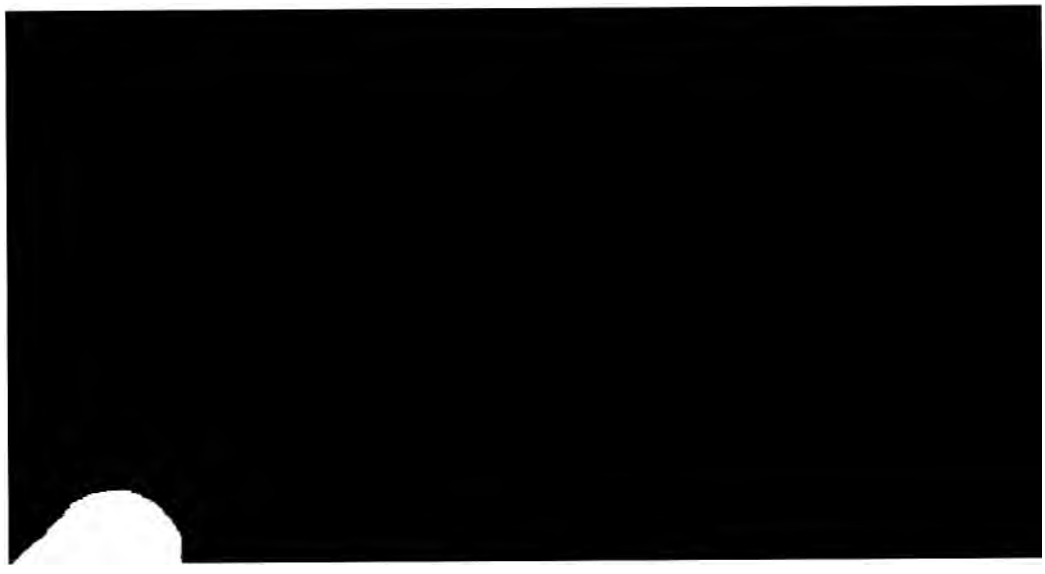
In the day-time it is good to sit on one of the jutting piers which fringe the bay of Kingston, and, lolling under the deep shade of a heavy roof, give the sea breeze free play with your hair. It is a touch of health, a vision of sweet coolness, a sensation of rare joy. You are in the atmosphere of Southern Europe. Round you spread the tropics. Shorewards the palm bends languidly as it feels the breath of the sea's vigour; the sun, seen through an ocean breeze, is dulled into purple haze; the moving boats and rocking masts give life and motion to a dead world. At midday the West Indies present the picture of death. There is no movement, no life current. It is as though the island of Jamaica were scorched dead. The birds float like ragged strips of paper on the edge of the breeze which dies on its journey inland. Here, by the sea, the senses are lulled to sweet indifference to all things save the noise and coolness of the breeze. Jamaicans call this breeze the doctor; it is the doctor that makes Jamaica a place fit for the homes of the white men. Without it, the place

would be a fever-ridden land of pestilence. With it, and not even the sun is more regular, the land is called a health resort.

As I sit here musing, the strip of land on which are planted the forts and military cantonments of Port Royal, swings seaward, a thin line of deep green, a false horizon for a sea of richest blue. Parts of the place are blotted out by sailing ships with canvas spread, or steamers, painted white, and little fishing craft. Above Port Royal a single strip of cloud rises from behind the land in a dull haze of grey; where the cloud-chain touches the light blue of the sky it bellies out white to the sun. The broad domes of this cloud-range are whiter than the snowy caps of the ocean rollers.

As I sit, breathing in the sweet coolness of the breeze, a flash of warm brown shoots from the blue of the sea, and a diving boy shimmers in the laughing sun. He will dive for pennies he says. Better sit here and cool I suggest, and in this manner I first get to know something of the inner life of Timothy Dorias, gamin and diving boy, as good a young rogue as you will find anywhere. Vicious and happy as the sun, joyous as the sparkling wavelet, he is thirteen, and, apparently,

DIVING BOYS, OFF BARBADOES



The Philosophy of a Gamin

No he does not go to church—there are no boots. His father is a fisherman, and he is of a family of eight. His two sisters stay at home and help their mother, who sees to the children and the grandchildren ; the grandchildren are offsprings of the two sisters. "No, sah, they be not married yet—some day perhaps." He wishes to show us strange places in the town of Kingston—a merry enough guide, but one lacking in restraint. His accent is mellow and he is not black. A rich, dark brown colour he is, with curly hair, white teeth, and deep black eyes. His stories of Jamaica are of intrigue, dancing eyes, and sunlight ; green-shuttered windows and soft glances. He is a born Romeo, a West Indian Don Juan.

The history of Jamaica he knows not, he says, neither can he tell us why some people are black and some white. Best of all is to be brown, "like me," he says ; then one is black to the black people, and white to the white. Really it is a wise thirteen-year-old, witness the postscript. "I should pass as white in England, but not here. Too many nearly white here, sah." He likes the black people best because they are "plenty more happier," but the money is in the hands of the whites. When he is old he will catch fish and live alone in a house with his wife and children. If ever he should tire of fishing, Jamaica is "plenty full of fruit." A little work would be necessary, perhaps, but he does not mind work. Witness the time he spends in practising diving in the Kingston bay, he says. Women will do his housework and attend to his fruit patch ; his wife will

see to the clothes of his children. Yes, perhaps it would be good to go out to the sea in big ships, and find adventure in lands beyond the colour line of the setting sun. But in the big ships there is little fruit, and women are not at hand to wait on men. No, it is better to remain where people are safe. Sometimes the big ships go away and never return. The reason is that some one on board has sinned in the eyes of God. Yes, everyone sins plenty often, but God is kind and shuts His eye, otherwise every living man and woman would be blasted dead. Women are not so important as men. We tell them they are, because it pleases them, and so they do more work. But really it is better to be a man. Women are weak and little in their minds, they are too much afraid, and too little given to thinking of big things. You must be kind, but not too kind, to a woman. If you are too kind, she will think you weak and foolish, and she will do no work for you. Yes, he loved his mother and his sisters, but he loved his father most of all, because he was big and strong, and fished in the bay even when the weather was very rough. His father only laughed and cuffed him when he stole the bananas from the cart in the market-place, but his

The Philosophy of a Gamin

His own people were better than the blacks, because they were whiter, and God himself is white. He was not certain whether black people would go to heaven, but he was certain that white and brown folk could go there and live in the skies in the same great house. When he went there he should want to dive plenty much, and fish in the river with a rod with a wheel on it. No, he was not afraid to die, except that if he died now he would find none of his friends in heaven. He never thought of sharks when he dived in the bay, but his friend had only one leg left, because a shark took the other one off when he was diving for pennies flung from an American fruit-boat. He guessed he made too much noise himself to please the sharks ; anyway he could dive under one if it tried to bite him.

He was telling us of his passion for the English and of his love of truth and justice, when suddenly he flung himself from our jetty and splashed into the bay to reappear well out of reach of land. A policeman appeared at my elbow and grinned quietly ; he assured us that he would have given much had the boy not caught sight of him as he crept towards us. The rascal was a thief and a blackguard, and he would be arrested, sure as eggs sah, and then birched or sent to gaol. This he assured us was true and unvarnished fact, on his word as a constable of justice. So much for Jamaican youth.

GOING TO CHURCH

THE DEVOTION OF THE JAMAICAN NEGRO

CHAPTER VI

THE DEVOTION OF THE JAMAICAN NEGRO

THE native of Jamaica flies to religion as an ant creeps to the honey-pot. Give a nigger a few catch-words and a ritual in which he can take a leading part, and there is no more religious man on the face of the earth. I never met a native man or woman who was not either Baptist or Methodist, Catholic or Church of England, or member of some other sect to which he or she clung with the strength of pious madness. There is no tolerance in the really religious Black. Every member of every other sect is a member of the eternally damned. In the opinion of the Catholic there is no hope for his Plymouth Brother. The Baptist cannot hope for the salvation of the Free Methodist. Every Sunday every religious nigger goes to church in the morning, in the afternoon if possible, and then again at night. After evensong there are open-air services where crowds of souls are saved, with great regularity, week by week. They tell each other that they have been plucked like a brand from the burning, and they dance and shout and sing; sometimes, in moments of great exaltation, they

grovel on the ground and clutch at the earth for inspiration and spiritual comfort. It is impossible for a saved soul to be cool. The idea of having so narrowly escaped from the burning brimstone inflames the hearts of the newly saved at each weekly performance. A revivalist ceremony closely resembles a fetich dance in an African forest. The ritual is similar, though the cause and effect are happily different. I do not wish it to be supposed that I venture to scoff at the religion of the natives of Jamaica. My desire is simply to attempt a description of the outward and visible effect of the religious services. At heart every negro is most painfully emotional. After undergoing the deepest sensation of salvation the negro wanders homeward satisfied, relieved, and very merry. There is no evidence of deep impression; no outward suggestion that the man is spiritually affected to any great degree. The impression I gathered was that Jamaicans are religious with their lips and voices; that salvation was a thing to be regularly sought and experienced once a week—just as among certain people in other more civilised countries. This capacity for the endurance of great spirituality gives birth in Jamaica to many lamentable exhibitions

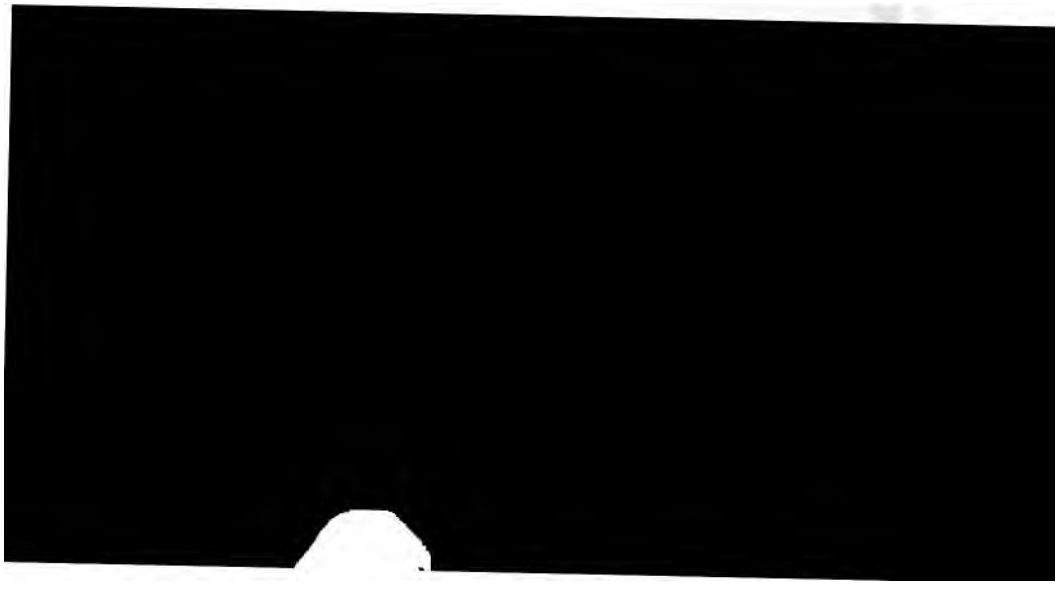
purchased a donkey in the market place and quietly attired himself in all the glory of the blue and gold of the British Navy. He mounted the donkey and loosely slung his sword so that the scabbard rattled along the cobbles of the rough Kingston roadways. Then, slowly he rode through the town. Men, women, and children followed him in mighty astonishment. He rode slowly, with bent head, his arms folded across his breast. By the time he reached the outskirts of the town the following crowd numbered many hundreds. He led them to a great field, and halted his sorry steed, and for several moments sat solemnly staring at his donkey's ears, making no movement. Suddenly he drew the sword from out the scabbard and flung himself upright in his stirrups, waving the sword aloft. Thrice he did this in silence. Then he turned to the wondering crowd and shouted—"Kneel to the might of God. Bow down to His servant. I am come to save you from sin."

Then he preached to them for an hour. He remained in that field for several days, and made many converts and found a multitude of followers. These he marched in procession to the side of a river in which he baptised them all. Part of his creed was that all people should bathe every day in water which he had blessed with his all powerful sword. He dispensed the blessed river water to many hundreds of people every day, making a money charge for every gallon. When he had amassed a small fortune he quietly disappeared, and left his flock leaderless and disconsolate. There appears to be many such chapters in the religious life

of Jamaica. The people are at the mercy of any adventurer who has sufficient intelligence and enough audacity to prey upon their credulity, and play his own hand with unfaltering boldness.

It would not be fair to suggest that all the inhabitants of Jamaica could be influenced by a jackanapes in a naval uniform and sword, riding on a donkey. There are of course a large number, a large majority, of really intelligent men and women who are properly religious. I mention extreme cases in order that it may be possible for you to gain some insight into the extraordinary character of the Black man. It is easy for any educated man to make great crowds of Jamaicans profess and call themselves Christians. To really imbue the people with a knowledge of the elementary duties of Christian people is a task of great difficulty. Sunday is their day of rest. The old people smoke their pipes and gossip in the shade of their doorways, the youngsters parade the town in all the glory of their gaudy finery. On Sunday the natural idleness of the coloured man is as it were legalised. Once a week their besetting sin of indolence becomes a real virtue. So the day is enjoyed to the full. It is never necessary to drive home to a

A GINGERBREAD-SELLER, ST. LUCIA



the parson people, are shy in the presence of the unbelieving. You can only enter a native synagogue by means of great cunning and an utter absence of self-restraint. The interiors of such synagogues are commonplace—you can see their furniture and fittings in any tiny bethel in poorer London. The difference lies in the people only; in Jamaica they are all utterly black and very happy. The preacher wears spectacles, and has a white beard and conventional clerical collar and white shirt. The congregation are attired in all the tints of a German Noah's Ark, and show examples of half the costumes known to civilisation and Whitechapel. Of course there are more women than men, but still the males that appear are not less zealous than the most excitable of the ladies. When the service has half spent itself, order, and the souls of the people, have become really affected. The solemnity of the place entirely disappears, and pandemonium comes in like a rustling, choking tornado. Men and women dance and pray and sing and shout, and then fall backwards to the hard wood floor clutching the empty air in the agony of spiritual exaltation. The preacher abstains from flinging himself into the heat of the melée with infinite difficulty, and by exercising his power of self-restraint in a manner inspiring to behold. The congregation exhausts its frenzy and lies quiet and purified, in the manner of a snake that has exhausted its poison gland in attacking the sacking held by an experienced charmer. In this manner is a large proportion of the population of the island every week, with

great regularity, saved from damnation. The parson is carried home to sup with the senior deacon, and the congregation disperses into little groups of devotees, each member anxious to examine the religious experience of his brother, or explain at great length his own sensations of salvation.

THE TURTLE WHARF, KINGSTON, JAMAICA

TURTLE FISHING

CHAPTER VII

TURTLE FISHING

"TURTLES or tortoises constitute one of the orders of reptiles, the *Chelonia*. They are characterised by having the trunk of the body incased in a more or less ossified carapace, which consists of a dorsal more or less convex portion, and of a flat ventral one, the so-called plastron."

If you could see a turtle panting for breath, sighing in fat breathless agony, or swallowing nothing, in the manner of a nervous singer, you would conclude that this description should be wrapped in more sympathetic terms. I can imagine nothing more absolutely pitiable than the sight of a full hundred turtle overturned, belly upwards, in the full glare of a noon sun, awaiting shipment over the four thousand miles of rolling Atlantic weather, to meet a doom intimately associated with the beginning, the first course, of an Aldermanic dinner. The soulful eyes of a panting turtle express knowledge of impending doom, and only half conquer agony. It is a sight to turn away from—one which must always be remembered at the first reading of a rich menu. But, really, in his native

haunts, the turtle is an elusive beast, a kind of marine De Wet, who wants a lot of catching, but who, once caught, proves himself or herself to be good all round. Good, that is, if belonging to the succulent green species, for the Hornbilled variety is of little use save for the production of tortoise-shell, and the Loggerhead is a truculent rascal who is best left alone. Strictly speaking, of course, the turtle is not a beast at all, but a reptile, dear to lovers of callipee and turtle eggs, and otherwise useful in a score of ways. Although this most succulent of all reptiles frequents all tropical oceans more or less, his true home may be said to be at the alligator-shaped island of Grand Cayman or Cairman, called by Columbus Las Tortugas because of the hosts of turtle that he found there. Grand Cayman is a dependency of Jamaica, and passed into the possession of the Crown soon after the conquest of the Queen of the West India islands.

Hunting the turtle is carried on in different ways according to the locality; the simplest plan, of course, is to waylay the female when she leaves the shore after depositing her eggs, and then just turn her on her back and wait until it is convenient to remove her to a kraal.

BOATS OFF DOMINICA

Turtle Fishing

The inhabitants of Grand Cayman are born seamen and turtle hunters, and they favour the last course. Their plan is to make large webbed fishing nets from the leaves of the thatch palm, first denuding the leaf of a certain membranous substance at the back, and then twisting into almost unbreakable cords and drying. This laborious task is all done by hand, and when the net is finished the strongest turtle vainly tries to release his head or fin from its meshes. The folks of Grand Cayman are their own boat-builders, and their custom is to sail in small fleets to the banks off the coast of Nicaragua, and cast their heavily-weighted nets in the direction the turtle is sure to take when intent upon an egg-laying expedition. Often enough the boats are out for weeks before enough turtle are captured to repay the boatmen for their labour. But, once caught, it is easy enough to hoist the net-entangled turtle into the schooners, where he is stored, shell downwards, in the hold, and fed on sea-grass and weed. At one time the trade suffered greatly because the Spaniards persistently destroyed the females before the eggs were deposited, simply for the sake of obtaining calipee. But nowadays the turtle is hunted with greater wisdom, and our civic fathers need not tremble for the future of their beloved delicacy.

With their cargo of turtles aboard the schooners make tracks for Jamaica, where their catch is deposited in kraals to await shipment to Europe.

It is a commonplace story when reduced to a bare description, but really the fishing is full of romance.

The West Indies

The sailing amidst the golden islands of the west, the anchorage off the sandy coast of Nicaragua ; the casting of the wide-meshed nets and the catching of heavy two or three hundred pound turtles, desperately savage. The turning of a half-exhausted turtle on to his shell-armoured back ; the noise of the heavy flapping of over two hundred fins stronger than a strong man's arm ; the pathos of continual sighing, uncanny, half human, wholly unnerving. The journey to the Jamaica jetty. The flopping of the catch into a deep-sea pool, boarded off from the open bay ; the feeding of the brutes with curious grass which, seemingly ignored, somehow disappears gradually, when no one is by to witness. Then the romantic drudgery of turtle fishing ends, and the dangerous part begins. The danger lies in the fishing from the pool, the turning on the hot wooden slab, the shipment, in a steamer homeward bound, and—the dinner table.

Of late there has been some excitement over Jamaica turtle fishing. The British fishers claim the right of fishing in places Nicaragua called her very own. Schooners were detained and a British ship of war journeyed to the fishing grounds to see that the game

feeding of the turtle is employment entailing the expenditure of very little bodily exertion ; the thrusting of a few heaps of weed through a loose board ; and the fishing comes but seldom, once a week perhaps, or once in two weeks. And, after all, a little danger is a good thing for a man who must swagger before his women folk as one in authority over more than a hundred turtle.

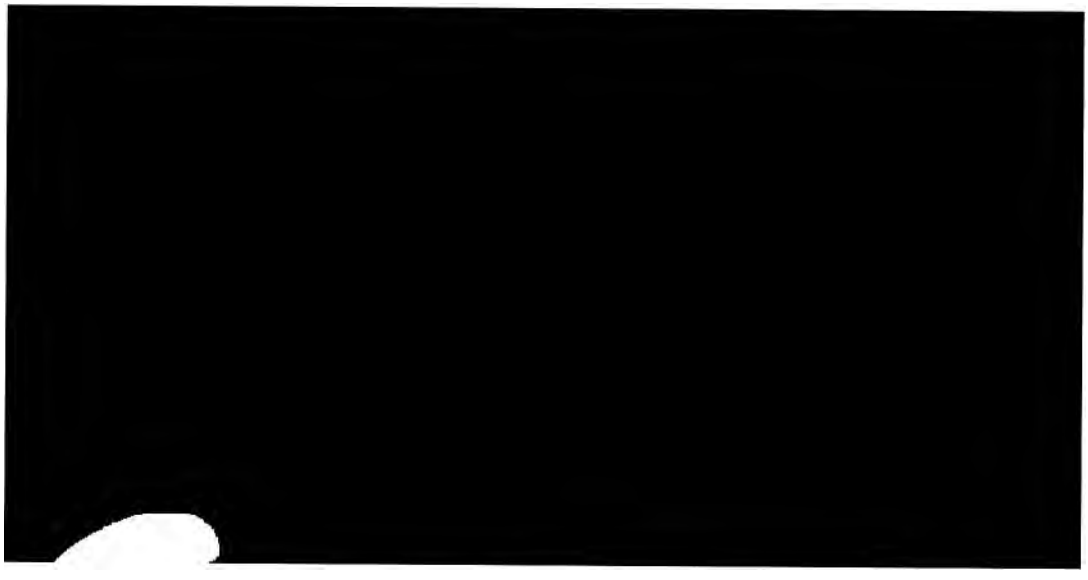
He will invite you to the fishing with all the joy of a young child conscious of an audience before whom he knows he can carry himself with distinction. First he strips in the full glare of noonday, and glories in the exhibition of his nudity. "I go among all those savage fishes with no knife, no, not even a gun," he will tell you. Though why a gun should be mentioned I cannot imagine, since his work is under water. He strides to the loose board with the air of an African chieftain in his village among his women and little children. And after all some weakness, if weakness it be, is permissible in a man who has to play a man's part in the fullest meaning of the phrase.

With a single rope in his left hand he falls, feet first, into the pool, in which the turtle are jostling each other for room. He disappears absolutely ; the surface of the pool is bare save for the half hidden shells of a group of the turtle. After two minutes, it may be a little less or perhaps a few seconds more, the man's head reappears, and he shouts to his watching mates the order to pull. They haul at the rope the other end of which sank with the man, the fisher mean-

while floating quietly and keeping a bright look out for the snapping heads of the beasts he could not avoid disturbing. The result of the hauling shows the white belly of a turtle as it is hoisted upwards, head first, out of the water. The noise of the heavy sighs, and the heavier noise of the sighing chorus in the pool, disturbs the whole jetty. Blood comes on the giant fins in the places where they touch the back shell. First the thrust head appears above the boarding, a head which at once resembles the face of a flat-nosed snake and the top of a mammoth branch of asparagus. The eyes roll like a drunken man to whom the shame of his drunkenness has suddenly become apparent. Then come the flapping fins, the broad white belly, and lastly the other fins. Then two hundred pounds of soup flesh is flung upwards and crashed on to its hard back shell; the rope which encircled its breast just below the fore fins is unloosed, and the poor beast is left to sigh and flap and shake in peace. It is almost impossible for a turtle to regain its legs once it has been turned fairly on its back. Then the fishing game begins afresh.

I saw just one hundred fish brought to light in this

NIGHT, ANOTTA BAY, JAMAICA



THE WOMEN OF WILD MAN STREET

CHAPTER VIII

THE WOMEN OF WILD MAN STREET

WILD Man Street is the central place of Jamaican gaiety. In the day-time it seems an ordinary street, white in the roadway and green in its walls of painted houses. The evening shadows blacken the place into an abode of infamy.

We drove there through the wild scents of a tropic night. The bejewelled skies sparkled no brighter than the flashing insects; the fresh sea breeze struggled in vain to kill the half Eastern scents of the garden flowers and aromatic woods. The singing of the insects made music which the soft air translated into a sweet lullaby. As you drive to the town of Kingston, the noises and the scents become more and more suggestive of the East. The place might be Ceylon, Yokohama, or Hong Kong. We were to see a bungalow which might be found with equal ease in the byways of any of these places; the difference existing only in the skins and tongues of the women. The place was larger than an ordinary house of the working people; the gaining of fugitive wealth is the only compensation looked for by the Jamaican dancing women.

The reception room was fitted with cheap muslins and common bamboo furniture. The stained wood floor was relieved in patches by tiny squares of matting or cheap imitations of the carpets of Turkey. Several of the rickety tables supported brass ash trays in which cheap and evil-smelling pastils smouldered unhealthily, half drowning the odour of the scents the women used. With finger rings made of silver, flashing with lack lustre glass or paste; arms and necks encircled with coral or cheap pearl bands, the women, gowned in flowing robes of white or yellow, listlessly sustained a difficult part. It is difficult for a gay woman to appear gay without the aid of strong liquors. This place is one of the houses where the women dance only at the bidding of white men, the black man is not a welcome guest. The women call themselves white; really they are brown or yellow or nearly black. They use powder freely, and cheap rouge also. The effect is awful; a black man in war streaks of white or vermilion is not more hideous; they speak the pigeon English of an affected Eurasian, with a tincture of the sing-song drawl of an educated negro. To these women all the other natives of Jamaica are coloured. They

A COLOURED GIRL

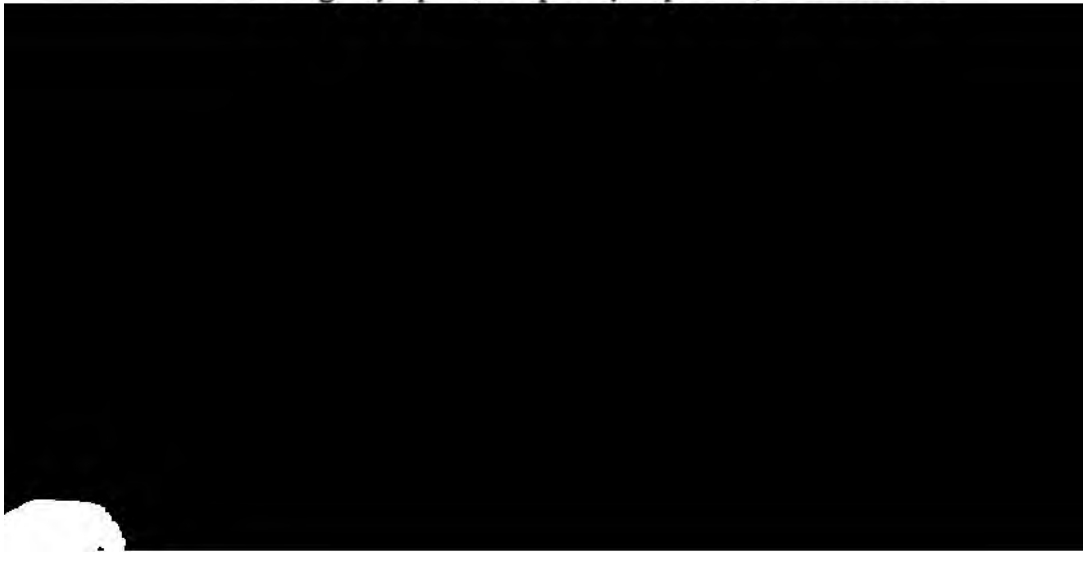
but they produced liquor and became animated. White teeth flashed and the accent became more coloured and so more natural. It was not pretty talk, and it was lacking in the elements of refinement. The gaiety of the women of this class always seems forced. As they talked and gesticulated the paint and powder flaked off their cheeks as whitewash scales off a crumpled ceiling. They lost their reserve and found abandon. One, of uncertain age but decided embonpoint, took up a mandoline, which was well varnished and hung with ribbons, but badly tuned, and sang a song. The words were indistinct; the title of the song I never knew; the tune I am glad to have forgotten.

The doors were closed and window shutters drawn; the unholy stench of the pastils filled the room with suffocating smoke; it was as though these women acted their parts and had obtained cheap properties and mismanaged scenic effects. The amusement of the place, if it existed at all, was colourless in the extreme. The dancing we did not see. So we left the place and found the sweet-smelling night breeze.

If it is possible to find a place in which the stupefying smoke of a burning pastil is not altogether bad, I would suggest that that place might be a hall in which black people are dancing the dignity dance. To the white man the negro is not without a curious odour, which seems to get more powerful when the black man takes violent exercise. Picture a room, bare as a barn, painted light blue, and filled to overflowing with people of all shades of colour, from ebony to dark walnut.

The West Indies

Though the window shutters are half open the light night breeze is too delicate to cool all the people in a room whose temperature must be above one hundred degrees. Arranged in couples the dancers are executing most weird and complicated antics—some with a certain degree of grace and rhythm—to the noise of a band of three tired musicians. Probably the dancing would be more regular if the music were abolished. If the three men were playing the same tune, each had learned the piece in different time, and was playing his hardest in order to show the others how the thing should really run. However the dancers did not mind, so the spectator had no right to grumble. The dancing waxed more furious, and the lagging music raced to keep pace with the spirit of the dancers. The more excited of the twirling crowd began to chant a weird chorus; the words seemed to be entirely impromtu, the melody was monotonous, and somehow it reminded me of the muffled sound of a band of tom-toms. The dignity dance itself, if it has any set arrangement at all, is something like the visiting and the grand chain in our lancers. The dancers, twirling in couples at most giddy speed, frequently separated, and the men



either fascinating or unique. Save for the coloured skin of the dancers, and the curious odour of the room, a similar scene can be witnessed in any European ballroom. From the dignity ballroom we went to a concert hall where all the performers were coloured and all the audience jet black. The performers seemed to enjoy the entertainment most of all.

The songs were delivered in European concert fashion, and they were mostly well known ballads :— "Robin Adair," "I dreamt that I dwelt in Marble Halls," and other old airs of that description. It was not an interesting performance. But the audience applauded everything, they encored everyone, and when a reciter appeared and gave a rendering of Hamlet by "Mr. William Shakespeare" members of the audience could scarcely contain themselves. It was a bad recitation, but I fancy the people in the body of the hall had paid their entrance money and were determined to make the best of the business. Certainly they seemed to like hearing themselves shout. We asked a supercilious half-breed, who wore an evening suit and a crimson necktie, where we could hear some native singing.

"If," said he, "you refer to the songs of the negroes, I can only indicate the low rum shops, and even there it is not permitted."

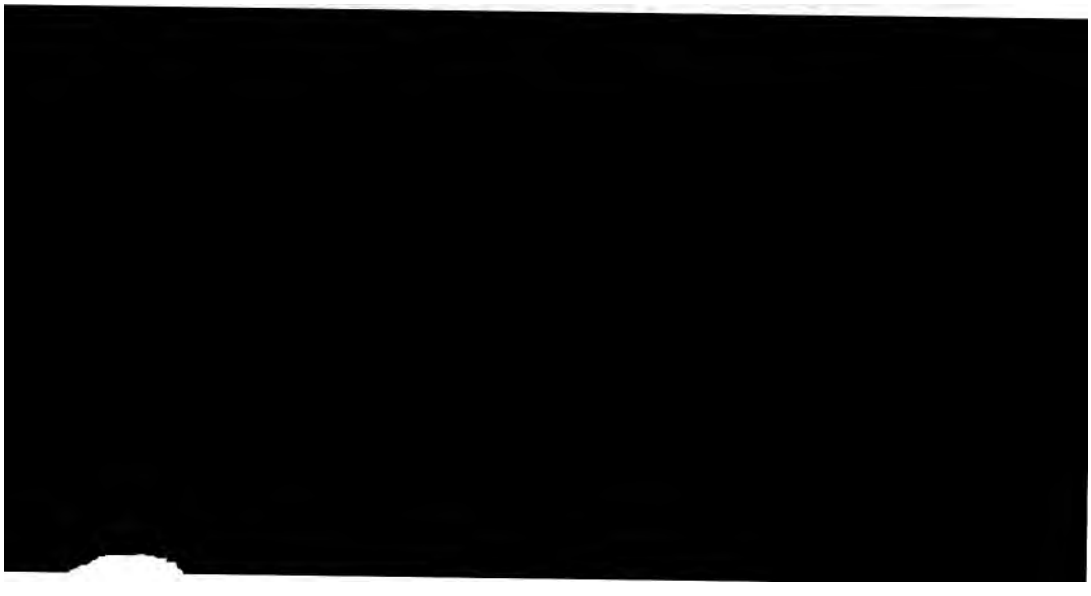
Evidently his opinion of the musical abilities of the black man was not a high one. However we accepted his advice and journeyed to the rum shops.

In the architecture of their drinking saloons, as in

nearly everything else, the Jamaicans have imitated New York rather than London. You enter a swing door and discover a long room fitted with a serving counter, and otherwise bare of furniture. A man presides over the rum bottles, and the drinkers are mostly negroes of the richer class; small shopkeepers, clerks, buggymen, and adventurers. We put our heads in the doors of many of the drinking shops but we never heard the native music.

We had to be content with a pilgrimage through the deserted streets of the capital. Save for a few buggies and now and then a noisy road car, Kingston was almost deserted. At some of the street corners groups of men were engaged in violent conversation, and occasionally we saw a policeman; otherwise the empty pavements echoed only the noise of our walking. There are no theatres in Jamaica, and all the wealthier people live in the distant suburbs. The poorer black men who live in the side streets of the town have to be up betimes, so they do not waste their strength by keeping up late at night. It is a cold and a deathly place at night, this little town of Kingston. No shop keeps open after dark; no lights appear in the

A SOLDIER OF THE WEST INDIAN REGIMENT



A COLOURED GIRL

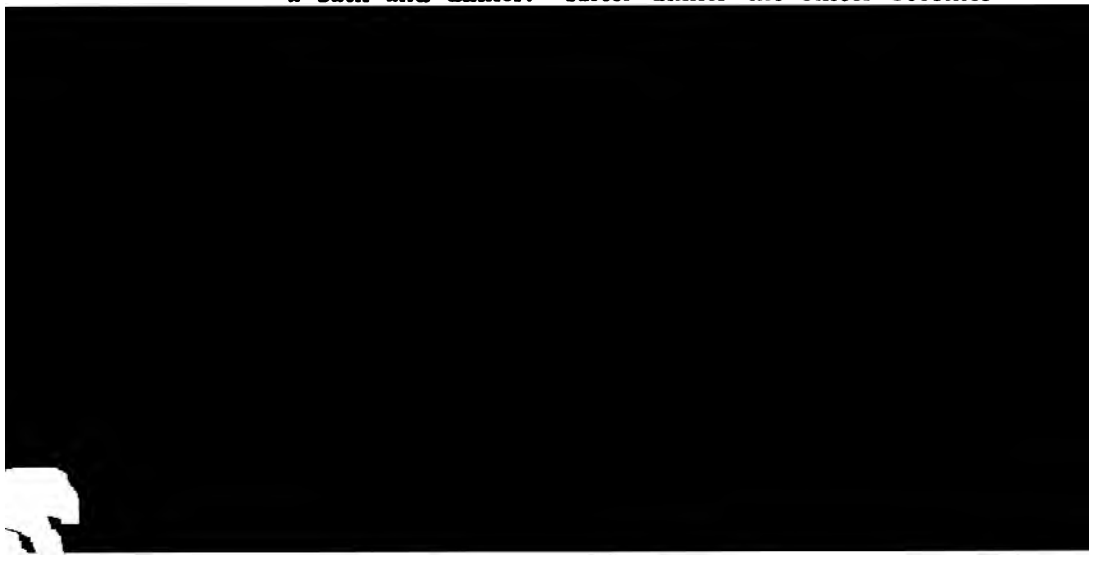
CHAPTER IX

THE WEST INDIAN ARMY

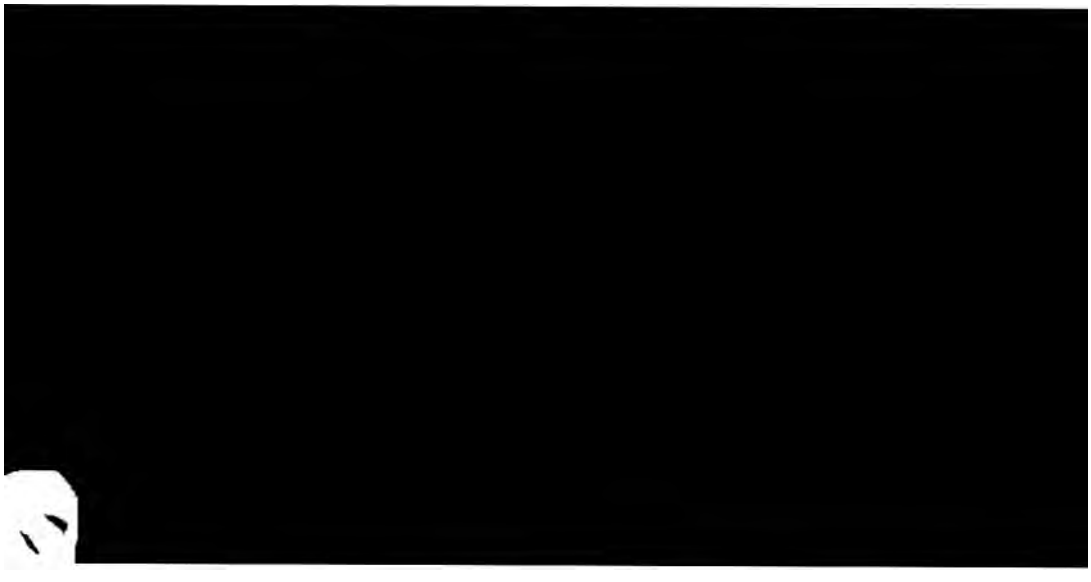
In Jamaica the Army is mainly considered as a prop to society. Among the whites the officers are in great request as dancing men, players at the game of tennis and possible husbands for fair daughters. Among the blacks the same applies to the coloured Tommy, except that there is no tennis. The West Indian regiments have seen service, and have proved their metal as fighting men in various parts of Africa. The West Indian Colonels are as proud of their black regiments as any commander of any white battalion of the line. But the languorous atmosphere of Jamaica does not suggest strife; so, the tendency among Jamaicans, high and low, rich and poor, is to regard the military as purely social people. When the Governor is one guest short at a dinner or luncheon or tennis function, an officer is requisitioned from the nearest garrison or camp. When Mama is hard up for men at one of her select dances, the subaltern receives a dainty invitation.

In the day-time the young West Indian Army officer gets through his early morning work as quickly as pos-

sible, and then scrambles, schoolboy fashion, into the playing fields. Drill is over by midday, and then the uniform (khaki and sun helmet) is flung aside for cool flannels or polo breeches. From midday until four the hours must be spent inside a house, away from the sun. So after luncheon it is forty winks, or cards or a game of pool. Then, when the full heat of the sun has smouldered into the early evening glow, the games begin. Polo, cricket, tennis, or golf; these are the first favourites. A few will take a spin on a fast pony; others, it may be, will sail across Kingston Bay and take a surf bath among the palisadoes. But for the majority it is either polo, cricket, tennis, or golf. Golf for seniors, polo for the young subaltern newly joined, tennis for the older captains, and cricket for full lieutenants. The two hours between four and six mark the playtime for the Jamaican Army. After six the clubhouses or mess smokerooms tinkle with the music of many glasses, as the young officers refresh themselves after two hours' work in a climate marking well above 100° on the thermometer. An hour with pipes and comrades over the friendly glass, and then a bath and dinner. After dinner the officer becomes



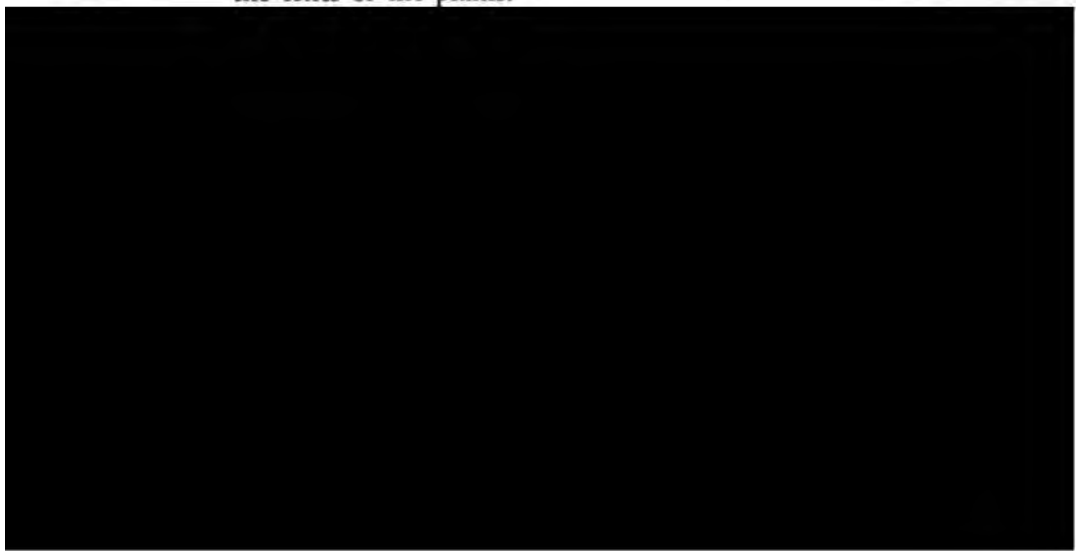
A TROPICAL LANDSCAPE NEAR CASTLETON



dines. If he can he gets off for the afternoon ; then he lounges into Kingston and plumes himself on the side walks to the admiration of the black and yellow girls. No sun has any terrors for your true West Indian soldier. His skull is thick enough even without the protection of his smart undress cap. His amusement is similar to that of an English Tommy in any garrison town, except that he does not drink so much. He is the idol of the populace; especially on the afternoon of the Sabbath, when, after Church is over, he is permitted to parade at large in the brilliant full-dress uniform of his regiment. Scarlet and yellow or scarlet and white, zouave jackets, and white or yellow spats, his get up is that of a French Zouave West Indianised; and he is the King of feminine Jamaica. He is popular among men and women alike, since the civilian men are conscious of a reflected grandeur when in company with a soldier in full dress. A military comrade helps them with the women, just as one returned yeoman peopled a smoke-room with heroes during our South African War. The black Tommy is paid his shilling a day, just as though he were a redcoated white man. He was recruited in some West Indian island, or in Western Africa in the district Sierra Leone,—he cares not where, for now his home is the cool barrack-room,—and he is quite content to stand before a few thousand people as a soldier of the King. Generally he has at least one silver medal to show that he has heard the music of the Martini fired in anger. He has fought savage races in lands where a white man has no right to go, and he knows

that he has his value. He is not jealous of the draft of the white British regiment which, for some unknown reason, is always to be found in the hills somewhere about Newcastle; he is not jealous because he is too conscious of superiority. Could a white regiment have marched in the full glare of the noon sun through Ashanti and not dropped a man? Could a white man pierce jungle and fight through malarious tangled undergrowth, wading slimy swamps, swimming rushing rivers, and live? Can any company of white soldiers march with the swing of a West Indian Regiment when the black pipers shriek the quick-step?

When the white men think they can, and say so, then West India rises by half companies and ties service razors on stout sticks of ebony, and there is riot in the land of perpetual sunshine. Black men are mauled with heavy belts in the fashion of the British Infantry, and white men stagger home gashed with razor cuts and faint for lack of blood. When the civil war is over, each side, conscious of victory, willingly forgives and for several months forgets. Then peace is found among the huts at Newcastle, and sweet peace amidst the tents of the plains.



soldier's friend, if she is not his sister, aunt, wife, or mother. So trouble sometimes springs from this source. Then it is out belts and razors until the officers intervene. Shots have been fired, but this is unusual. And the result of the court-martial offers no encouragement to would-be marksmen. As a rule the Tommies, black and white, mix and fraternise as well as may be expected. Each has a large respect, well mixed with a great contempt, for his alien brother. Each serves the same white King whose dominion over all the earth is unquestioned. The King is the common sentiment to which hangs the brotherhood of the British soldiers, white and black.

On the other hand the Jamaican police are not popular with the people of the island. The uniform they wear is not sufficiently striking; there is no great blaze of colour—no suggestion of power or rank or beauty. A plain white tunic and dark blue trousers with a red stripe, a simple white helmet and plain black leather boots, make up the uniform of the Constabulary. It is impossible for a negro to respect such a costume, or to be proud of a police so uniformed. So the people have come to look upon the policemen as workers; men made for use, and not turned out for the sake of ornamenting a town already bright and picturesque enough. And it may be that this is the reason why the Jamaican constable is regarded as a judicial potentate—a man whose word is law—a person to be avoided, even feared. The presence of a policeman stops the noisy jabber of a street crowd of

fruit-sellers; his approach melts a group of excited quarrellers; his uplifted hand stems the tide of rushing traffic—just as it is in England. The police are efficient and unpopular. The constable alone among the inhabitants of Kingston does not lounge and laugh and chatter. If he smiles it is with an air of conscious superiority. The mouths of the men are curved downwards in the form of a perpetual sneer. The law cannot be merry; the limbs of the law may not be humanly happy.

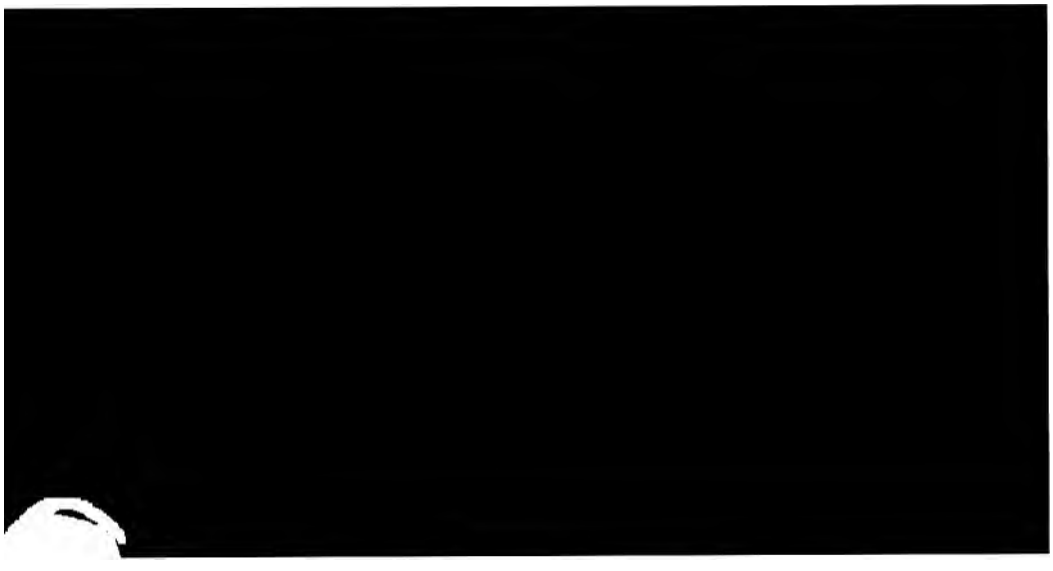
The Jamaican police force is well organised and very efficient. There are inspectors and sub-inspectors, staff-sergeants and sergeants and constables, and above all one white Chief. Most of the senior officers are white men; the rank and file are black and brown, and yellow and dusky white. It is on the rank and file that the work of Government falls. A plain constable in Jamaica is a far more powerful man than any white-gloved, long-sworded police inspector in England. Every regulation beat in the island of rivers is a court-house, presided over by an impartial and all powerful policeman-judge. Fifty times a day he will be called upon to arbitrate in matters of great delicacy. It may

Round such street-corner courts small crowds are allowed to congregate, and respectfully listen to the words of one whose knowledge of police-court ritual stands him in good stead. I have heard a policeman restore to a woman that good name which the jealousy of a chattering neighbour had flung to the four winds; the same man afterwards settled a knotty point in regard to the freshness of a heap of fish which a despondent purchaser pleaded were bad. This was a serious case; the constable smelt the fish and handled them with the reverence of an usher for a barrister's brief bag. In this instance the judgment of the constable gave satisfaction to one man and made him unpopular with a crowd. It was openly suggested that he had received a promise of largess from the man whose case he upheld. As a body the force has a Spartan-like love for unpopularity, born of the exhibition of unbending power in performing their illegal office of judge and jury. I once toured the side streets of the city with a pompous black sergeant who obviously knew the town only from the kerbstone to the railing. The Jamaica police have no eyes that see through brick walls. They have a love for intrigue, but lack the capacity of meeting cunning with detective craft. If a thing is to be seen with the naked eye they see it well enough; but, as a rule, they have no imagination and no power of working up theories. Sherlock Holmes would have been a chemist only had he been born a negro.

Every constable seems to imagine that, socially and politically, he is far above the ordinary inhabitant. He

feels towards his coloured brethren in about the same way as a cavalry colonel feels towards a newly-joined militia private. Between a member of the constabulary force and an ordinary person there can be no close friendship. The black policeman lives in a atmosphere of the police court, and seems always to regard every member of the public as a possible prisoner and a certain criminal. Really in his heart I think he feels the bitterness of his exalted loneliness. He inwardly regrets the necessity of his aloofness from human pleasures. He would probably prefer to be a soldier. This he will never admit, even to himself. But, I repeat, probably he would prefer to be a soldier of the line. The uniform is better; it is far more picturesque. And the men of the West Indian Regiments combine dignity and popularity in a manner entirely mystifying to the Jamaican police. Besides, the brilliant-soldier companies march down the high road to the music of pipes and drums, and the weary constable has to stand by and see that the road is clear. The soldier is a picturesque hero; the police constable is—a constable of justice and nothing more.

OUTSIDE A WEST INDIAN COURT HOUSE



A WEST INDIAN COURT HOUSE

CHAPTER X

A WEST INDIAN COURT HOUSE

A SQUARE room painted white and fitted with dull red benches and a raised platform; on the platform the magistrate, a weary-looking man with faded hair and wrinkled face, and eyes screened by gold-rimmed spectacles. As he sits, listlessly playing with his papers, apparently indifferent to the pleadings of the prisoners, or the garrulous stormings of nervous witnesses, he seems to suggest a tired speculator reading the first official details of his own bankruptcy. Occasionally he raises his voice and a hushed court hears, "All right, get down now," and a witness, only just sufficiently recovered from nervousness to have reached the period of unintelligible verbosity, gets down with a sulky jerk and proud bearing. All Jamaican negroes speak a language officially known as English. From the fact that it is alleged that he can understand the unbroken flow of their fearful eloquence, the magistrate must be counted a man of consummate linguistic ability. In front of the platform is a huge table, at which all the whites and yellow-whites of the district are foregathered

to witness the administration of justice. At the head of the table, and at the feet of the magistrate, is the clerk; an ancient man with the remains of a weak voice, and a habit of looking over his steel eye-glasses in the approved scholastic style. He is an important, if not a picturesque personage. The decorative touch is afforded to the court by the appearance of the inspector of police. He sits at another corner of the large table behind a great white helmet carefully placed on the summit of a large pile of important blue papers, in the proper crown and cushion fashion. The helmet is the police inspector's shield and guard, and badge of office It is an inflexible example of the power and nobility of the law; it is an object on which the prisoners may fasten their eyes, should they be unable to gaze for ever into the inscrutable depths of the spectacles of the presiding magistrate. Compared with the magistrate, the clerk and the inspector of police, the other whites and yellow-whites are unimportant. Planters and tradesmen, and commission agents, they lounge gracelessly round the table, fingering their riding whips or pulling at the ends of their scrubby beards. The table marks the boundary line of the charmed circle,

swamps behind the Gold Coast, is answering to a charge of stealing, feloniously and with malicious intent, one and a half pairs of meat known and described (in Jamaica and elsewhere) as pig's trotters. As we entered, the prisoner at the bar was tearing at the mangy patches of his mud-coloured hair, and pleading "I no took them master, sir, yer honor, I no took them; I ask to be set free. I no see them, I no eat them, 'fore God in 'eaven."

It was interesting to watch the varied emotions playing over the expressive faces of the watching crowd of the man's enemies and friends. Enemies first, because the natives seemed as cruelly thoughtless, and quite as vicious, as the ladies in any balcony at a Spanish bull-ring. When the monotonous mumble of the magistrate has finished, only the pleased smile of the prisoner told us the news of his acquittal. To the unexperienced ear, the magistrate's mumble was just as incomprehensible as any of the jargon of the witnesses themselves.

The next two or three cases were concerned with the question of paternity, and in each instance the plaintive lady received the consolation of eighteen-pence a week for a period of years. Then followed a charge of assault. One lady had beaten another with an implement remotely resembling a carpenter's stool. On each side there were many witnesses and, apparently, many liars. One coquette in a West Indian gown of yellow, green, blue, and pink, ventured to repeat to the court some of the vulgar abuse which, in her opinion,

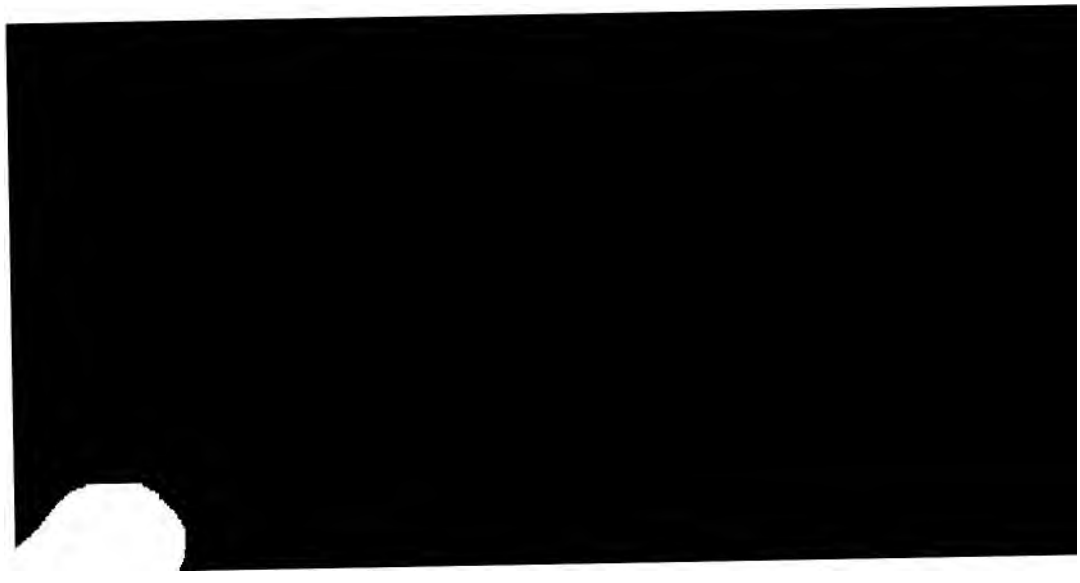
contributed to, and completely justified, the assault referred to. Hers was an eloquent and ingenious pleading. First, she swore before God and Heaven that the assault was not an assault at all, "Ester did not lay a finger on the woman"; then she justified the assault in language which stirred even the lethargic magistrate. "Such language will do your friend no good; it only serves to show that you are a low abandoned woman"—he ventured to remark in a low, even monotone.

"So's she, she is low and abandoned too; she is . . . and she said" . . . The woman was on her metal, and desired above all things to incriminate the enemy of her friend.

In the end someone was fined eight shillings and costs. Who it was I never knew; but my impression is that it was either a witness or the police constable.

Two young and innocent-looking boys were charged by a one-legged baker with stealing a loaf, value one penny. The baker was evidently a man of parts, one of which was religion. He kissed the book with a vivacious reverence and commenced, "Your Honour and gentlemen:—Them two boys Simon Fogarty and

A NEGRO NURSE WITH CHINESE CHILDREN, JAMAICA



Fogarty, and he struggle so hard that I oblige to call in the aid of Constable Perkin, who shall come before your Honour and say I speak the truth only. When I go back to my shop I find that one loaf had gone. I run into the street and see Thomas Smiff with my loaf to his lips. I call witness to see him also, and they tell you how the wicked boy, who is the pest of the street, eat my loaf for which I receive no payment." The police constable confirmed the baker's statement, and the magistrate looked bored to extinction. It is just the police court in which that ancient suburban drama "Black justice" might be performed with propriety.

In spite of the eloquence of the baker and the accurate testimony of the police constable, those boys might have been let off with a caution; but, just as justice was looking its weakest, the police inspector rose, and, placing one hand gracefully upon the summit of his helmet, addressed the court.

"May I venture to say that those boys are the most incorrigible rascals in the district. They do no work; they are dirty, lazy, and a terror to the neighbourhood. They give more trouble to the police than any other man or woman on the island." The quality of mercy is immediately strained, and although the pardon flows out (mainly because the baker requests it) the dregs remain in a sentence to come up for judgment when called upon to do so.

The boys jointly attempt to hide a wide and intelligent grin behind the battered remains of what must once have been a felt hat.

And so the court goes on.

The merry hum of the day insects mingles with the shrill tones of singing birds, and the chatter of anxious litigants in the yard below. The magistrate continues his anxious calculations, and the clerk is assiduous in his endeavours to balance a pair of rusty pince-nez on a nose obviously too slippery with sweat. The police inspector frowns round the room from behind the majestic screen of his helmet, and the black usher shouts silence, or swears a witness after the usual caution of " Take se bible in you righ' 'and " . . .

TROPICAL RAIN

THE
MILITARY CAMP AT NEWCASTLE

CHAPTER XI

THE MILITARY CAMP AT NEWCASTLE

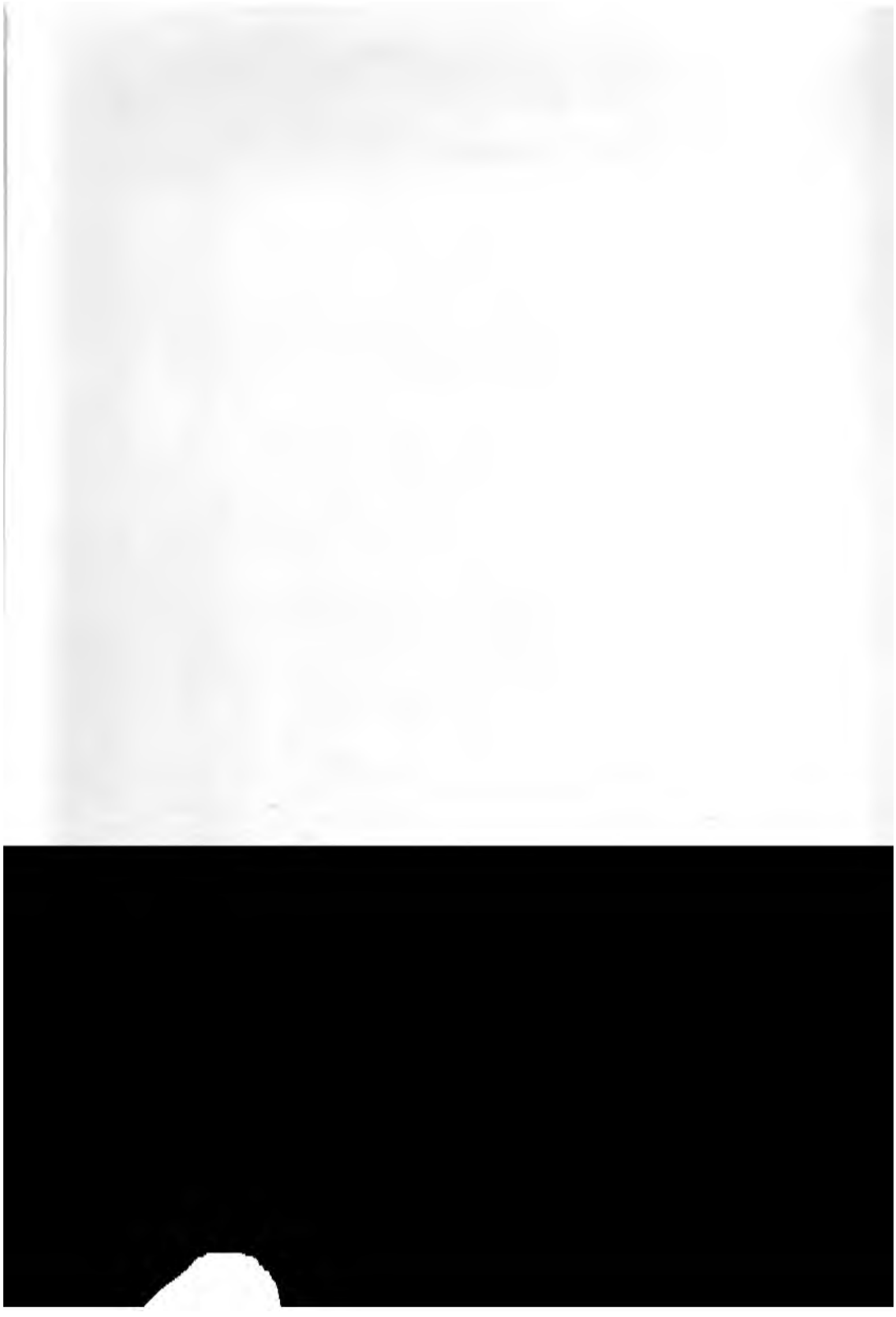
In the streets of Kingston I had frequently seen companies of one or other of the brilliant West Indian Regiments swinging along to the music of their drums, and on dance and dinner nights I had noticed Artillery officers lounging about the terraces of my hotel. I had seen a couple of Service Corps men trying their polo ponies, and afar off, among a sparkling group of bejewelled women, I once caught sight of a glittering aide-de-camp. But of our friend Tommy of the line I had seen nothing. A friendly Artilleryman assured me that some of the British Line were on the island. I met him in the Kingston High Street, and he pointed towards the mountain chain which overhangs the town. "They're up there," he said. Following his direction, I saw a few white specks faintly showing through the summit haze of a mountain peak. The white specks, I discovered, were the cantonments of Newcastle, the military hill station of Jamaica.

The next morning we started at nine, and drove along shaded lanes and dusty, open roads, flanked by

gardens and plantations, banana trees, pines, and cocoa-nuts. Around us the air was transparently clear, above us a sky of the deepest blue, and everywhere—above, below and around—we felt the sun. For two miles we had the level road, and then we reached the mountains.

A rushing mountain torrent crashing through a deep chasm filled almost to the brim with giant boulders, on which trees and plants and creeping flowers had found abundant soil; a road twisting like a tangled thread up and along the face of the mountain, and then lost in the mists of the summit; a heavy scent of tropical flowers; a vast sea of flashing colour—these things marked the beginning of the mountains. Slowly we crawled along a road just wide enough to contain our buggy. On one side the mountain walled us in; on the other a precipice deepened as we ascended. The valley below and the walls around were clothed in yellow grass and thickly set with trees; cotton and pine and cocoanut, banana, orange, and a hundred others grew in clumps and groves and lines, just as their father-seed had fallen or casual native had chanced to plant. Sometimes we passed a mile or so of level stretch, and there we found plantations and nigger huts. Below us we could see coffee

A HOUSE ON THE HILLS



and we found the clammy rain-mist. Somehow we had slipped away from joyous sun-kissed Jamaica and found Newcastle.

If I were a soldier I should pray all day long that I might never see the military station at Newcastle. Imagine a small parade-ground, levelled by spade work; a straggling collection of huts, built on never-ending steps; a few cottages for the officers; a very obvious burial-ground, well stocked with tombstones streaked with names, planted among the huts just outside the reading-room, and you have the cantonments of Newcastle. On the parade-ground, half a yard from the face of a step of rock thirty feet high, a couple of posts and a tape enable the sporting Tommy to practise goal shooting from dawn till sunset. Failing this he has half-a-dozen six-week old English newspapers in the reading-room, and a magnificent view of Kingston always to be seen through the mists and rain which seem for ever to bedim this eerie camp. The officers, I believe, have a tennis-court; but for Tommy it is shooting the goal, the newspapers, or the view, if he wishes to avoid the cells. Otherwise——

I heard the story from Tommy himself. He showed us the camp; first the burial-ground, and then—"Well there ain't much more to see 'ere. That's the parade-ground, and that's the sergeants' mess. We sleeps over there, and bein' Sunday, the canteen don't open to-day till six. We usually shoots the goal, and smokes, and sometimes we rags the blacks. See that nigger 'ut? Well, we goes there sometimes—of course, it's out'er bounds—

and takes the beer and rags the blacks. Once we chucked three or four of 'em over the gully because they set on one of ours. There's one or two in cells now for molestin' the natives. Then some of us deserts, you know. Goes off down to the coast, ships as firemen and gets to the States. I 'aven't done that yet. Don't know why we come up 'ere; there ain't no fever nowhere now . . ." It was a long and interesting description he gave us. I gathered that in spite of the parade-ground and kicking the goal; in spite of the reading-room, with its platform and soldier-painted scenery; in spite even of the tiny billiard-table and the picturesque cemetery, the life of Tommy in garrison at Newcastle is not a jolly one. Tired of doing the things he is allowed to do, and without the means to appreciate expensive joys of the canteen, the youthful, full-blooded soldier sallies forth on mischief bent. Then he experiences a salutary change of scenery in the confines of the cells. Sometimes, as our friend remarked, he deserts.

Every year for many weary months a few hundred Tommies do these things in Newcastle. Kingston and the plains are peopled by tourists in search of health and

situated in the midst of a deadly swamp. From Fort Augusta the military authorities jumped to Newcastle. Fifty years hence these gentlemen may realise that the plains of Jamaica are perfectly healthy, and that Newcastle is really a little dull; until then—poor Tommy.

Newcastle is not unhealthy: it is merely a little damp and a little dull. From the point of view of the tourist it is magnificent. The romantic grandeur of the giant mountain chains stretching east and west; the wonderful view of town and harbour; the marvellous colour effects; the cathedral-like solemnity of the place—all these things are delightful in the extreme. But I turned my back on the place without regret. For I remembered that far below the valleys were bathed in light and warmth and colour. I knew that halfway down the mountain I should find the orange, the passion flower, and the scented air of the tropics. And I was glad when the horses bumped us along the path which zigzagged downwards through the clouds to the land of sunshine.

GOING TO WORK, BARBADOES

THE
RECREATIONS OF THE BLACK MAN

CHAPTER XII

THE RECREATIONS OF THE BLACK MAN

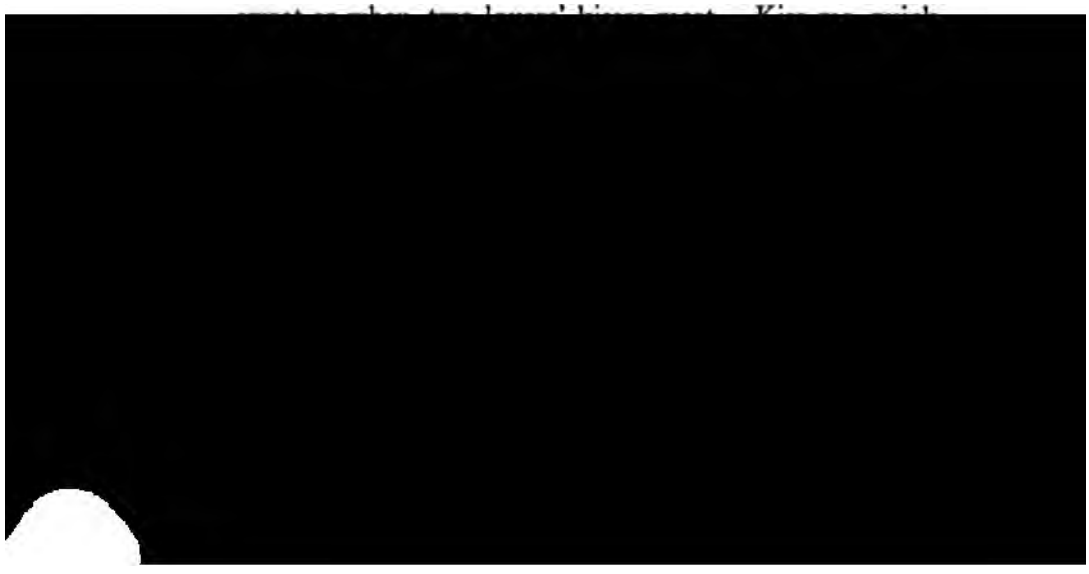
FOREMOST in the list of a negro's recreations should be placed the game of love. The black man makes love with the persistency of a Don Juan and with the fervour of a Mexican. He learns his first lessons in courtship long before the school-day age is over. Every boy of twelve has his honey girl, just as every coloured man of sixteen has his wife. There is an Arcadian touch in their love meetings—a fascinating rhythm of sensuous art in their songs of passion. The concert platforms and music halls of London have reflected, not incorrectly, many negro love stories; and the large straw hats and white pants and extravagant phraseology may be counted as roughly typical of the costume and poetry of Jamaica. The negro makes love with the natural freedom of a savage, but the Jamaican negro tempers his love-making with poetic entreaty. I can imagine that the Jamaican loves to hear the sonorous doggerel of his own ecstatic wooing—that he pleads with his mistress as much for his own pleasure as for hers. The black lady listens, and loves to listen, because his extravagant

praise appeals to her vanity, and the black lady is as vain as any white daughter of a rich "buccra." It may come as a shock and surprise to most of my readers to learn that the love-sick black man sometimes declares his love by letter. Whether this is always due to bashfulness or to the accident of geographical distance, I know not. But I have been privileged to read one or two impassioned missives duly authenticated as being the love letters of coloured men to dusky belles. They are interesting enough for reproduction here. I obtained them from a copy of a Christmas number of a Jamaican paper—the *Gleaner* of Kingston.

The first is written by a love-sick native to a Creole widow. It is addressed in full to

"Mrs. Agostiss R——.

"I hope you know Valintine is now in season. I will take the pleasure to write you this; my hearth is yours and you are mine, but do you know it. I love you as the bee love the flower. The flower may fade, but true love shall never. My love for you is a love that cannot be fade. You shall be my love here as in heaven for ever. The Rose in June is not so



The second epistle has a religious flavour. King Solomon is artfully brought forward as a sort of "backer" of the ardent writer's suit: —

"My dear Love—At present my love for you is so strong that I cannot express. So I even write that you may see it. It is every man deauty to write a formil letter.

"My pen is bad and my ink is pale, but my love will never fail. King Solomon say that Love is strong as death, and Jealousy is cruel than the grave. Love me little, bear me longer; hasty love is not love at all. This is the first time I sat down to write you about it.

"I love my Dove. Your love is black and ruby—the chefer of ten thousand. You head is much fine gold. You lock are bushy and black as a raven. Your eyes was the eyes in the river, by the rivers of water. Your cheeks as a bead (*i.e.* bed) of spices as sweet flowers. Your lips is like lilies. You hand as gold wring. Your legs as a pillar of marble set upon sockets of fine gold. Your countenance as a Lebanon. Your mouth look to be more sweet. Your sweet altogether.

"I have no more time to write as I am so tired and full time to go to bead. I will now close my letter with love."

Poor "Garg Plummer" is in a desperate plight indeed. It is to be hoped that his "dear lov" listened to his strong entreaty. But it could not be otherwise. What human woman could resist the following :—

ROSIE, A JAMAICAN NEGRESS

you mek me promise to be my true luv? You must know dat I has heard a lot of tings about you which has been sorely disappoint me in you.

"I have heard dat you stan at your gate and talk to a fine dress coachman. I have heard dat you go to church wid him. I have heard dat you am promise to me but you luv him. GEORGE.

"Many kisses me sweet luv."

The sixth, and last, is a jumble of incomprehensible passion. No doubt the writer knew what he meant, and perhaps the lady was able to interpret the author's meaning. But I do not know whether the average reader will gain much by reading :—

"DEAR ELIZA—I take the liberty of myself to inform you this few lines, hoping you may not offend (*i.e.* be offended), as often is. I had often seen you in my hearts. There are myriads of loveliness in my hearts toward you. My loving intentions were really unto another female, but now the love between I and she are very out now entirely.

"And now his the excepted time I find to explain to my lovely appearance, but whether if their be any love in your hearts or mind towards me it is hard for I to know, but his I take this liberty to inform you this kind, loving, and affectionate letter.

"I hope when it received into your hand you receive with peace and all goodwill, pleasure, and comforts, and hoping that you might ansure me from this letter

with a loving appearance, that in due time Boath of us might be able to join together in the holy state of matremony.

"I hoping that the answer which you are to send to me it may unto good intention to me from you that when I always goine to write you again I may be able to write saying, my dear, lovely Eliza.

"Your affectionate lover, affraied (*i.e.* afraid), J.S.

"Dear Eliza, wether if you are willing or not, Please to sent me an ansure back. Do my dear."

So much for the black man's love letters.

For an accurate picture of the love scenes you must visit the island of rivers and take your place in one of those quiet corners of the banana field, and wait for George and Jemima, or James and Mrs. Agostiss R——. I cannot describe the scene. Go to Jamaica and see it for yourself. It is enough that I have made public the love letters of six men I have never seen; I will not attempt to deal with the meeting and courting of a black man and his sweetheart, lest, unconsciously, I should travesty a fine poem.

The scenes of the love meetings of the natives of

dancing may be counted the recreations of the Jamaican coloured gentleman. Though it cannot with justice be stated that the negro is an excessively large eater, the manner in which he takes his food evidences the keen enjoyment he gets from every meal. There is no question of lack of appetite in a negro when feeding time arrives. Whether the dish before him be fruit or salt fish, or mashed vegetables cooked with fat, the diner attacks his food with the utmost relish. There is great licking of lips, rolling of eyes and heavy munching by strong jaws. Give a negro a meat bone, and when he has done with it the fragments that remain would not be of the slightest service to the hungriest dog. When the native has finished his dish of vegetables he cleans the plate with his fingers and tongue. There is no food wasted in the land of eternal sunshine. Give a black child a dozen mangoes and then watch from a safe distance. Before you have seen the child's manner of eating, you have not realised how juicy a mango really is. With the negro, eating is not an art, but a sensation of concentrated joy. It is very much the same with drinking. He can go an extraordinary length of time without needing any liquid, but when a negro gets the bottle to his lips, quarts disappear at every gulp. No matter whether the drink be water or cokernut juice or rum, the true black man cannot sip. He drinks as much as he can swallow without stopping to take breath, and then he has finished.

A social gathering is never a success in any Jamaican hut or drawing-room unless the assembled guests are

given leave to indulge in the pastime of the dance. Dancing is to the black lady what small talk is to her white sister. Indeed, it is infinitely more even than that. Dancing is everything. They dance when they are merry and full of joy, and they dance when they mourn their dead; they dance when they are hungry and when they have feasted. They dance when they are carrying their fruits to the market-place, and they dance as they return with the spoils of their trading. In moments of religious ecstasy their limbs twitch for the relief found in treading the graceful measure, and when great sorrow has fallen on a household, the members dance slowly to express their woe.

Curiously enough their dancing lacks precision; they have not set pieces; no master teaches them "left foot forward, right foot up, twist"; there is no "one two three, hop, one two three, hop" about the coloured dance, yet it is always perfectly graceful. If there is music so much the better, but if there is no music the dancing goes on just the same. The Jamaicans dance with their legs and bodies and heads; all their limbs are brought into play. The arms wave in sympathy with the active legs, the body bends, the head is thrust

COUNTRYWOMAN GOING TO MARKET, BARBADOES

is not without a certain weird and extravagant humour. When the story is of a more bellicose kind—when, for instance, the tableau is that of David and Goliath, the David sometimes overdoes the punishment of the vanquished giant, and there is a little riot caused by the indignation of a too severely-handled artist, who had been persuaded with difficulty to enact the unpopular part. To the black people acting ceases to be make-believe as soon as the dancing begins; David is David, and Goliath is in fact the unhappy giant. So it can be imagined that difficulties frequently arise though there has been no malicious intent, and though the violence may have been born of pure unconscious art.

Sometimes the coloured dancers break into song, and then the bizarre effect is heightened and intensified. The soft, melodious chants of the happy darkies are in perfect keeping with the languorous climate and romantic scenery of the tropical island. The songs are of love and passion. "Ma honey and ma little bird, ma sweet lips and true love" are the usual descriptions of the black man for his mistress. Most of these songs can be heard in the High Street of Kingston, in the early hours of market days when the villagers come down from the country to sell their garden-produce. But the real recreation of the negro is love-making; and all these things, with the exception of the eating and drinking, are simply parts of the game.

A MARTINIQUE LADY

THE DANDY AND THE COQUETTE

CHAPTER XIII

THE DANDY AND THE COQUETTE

You can see him in the market-place or in the drinking-shops. Sometimes he lolls about with his thin cigarette on the Kingston tram cars, but more frequently he is to be found leaning on his walking-stick at the corners of mean streets. As a rule his straw hat is tilted in the fashion affected by the London office-boy when taking his lady-love for a Sunday stroll on Peckham Rye. His coat is cut in the tight American style, which may be admirable for the comfort of people who live in climates colder than that of Kingston, Jamaica. His trousering is vivid and lacking in style, and his yellow boots are cut with the easy grace of a working cobbler who also deals in pictures. The glory of his get-up is his collar. It may be that our Dandy is not rich enough to afford a frequent laundry bill, so that his collar is worn to the bitter end of its condition of starchiness. Nevertheless it is always there, encasing the neck, and twisting each discordant ear in a manner painful to behold. He walks with a curious strut—for all the world like a half-lame peacock; and when he

meets any member of the fair sex he curls back his heavy lips and displays two rows of the whitest teeth. When he winks one is irresistibly reminded of the famous drill-sergeant who instructed his troop of country yeoman to "draw swords and twist your eyes round with a loud click." The negro's wink is a serious matter; it suggests a wealth of fearful possibilities. It is repellent, but alluring—frightfully attractive.

As a rule it is a youth who mixes much with the tourists that ventures in this unseemly manner to ogle the women and decorate the promenades. In his working hours the true Dandy is usually a call-boy at one of the hotels, or an assistant waiter. It is not at all certain that he is a single man; probably he has a young wife who takes in washing, or cleans the boots at some boarding-house. But his better half is never to be seen at his side when he dons his yellow boots and crimson necktie and goes for his Sunday stroll. He feels that it would be foolish to permit the dowdy rags of his working spouse to discount the glory of his rich attire. So he twists his cigarette (he cannot afford to light it since he has not got another) in his brass ringed fingers, and struts and grins in solitary grandeur.

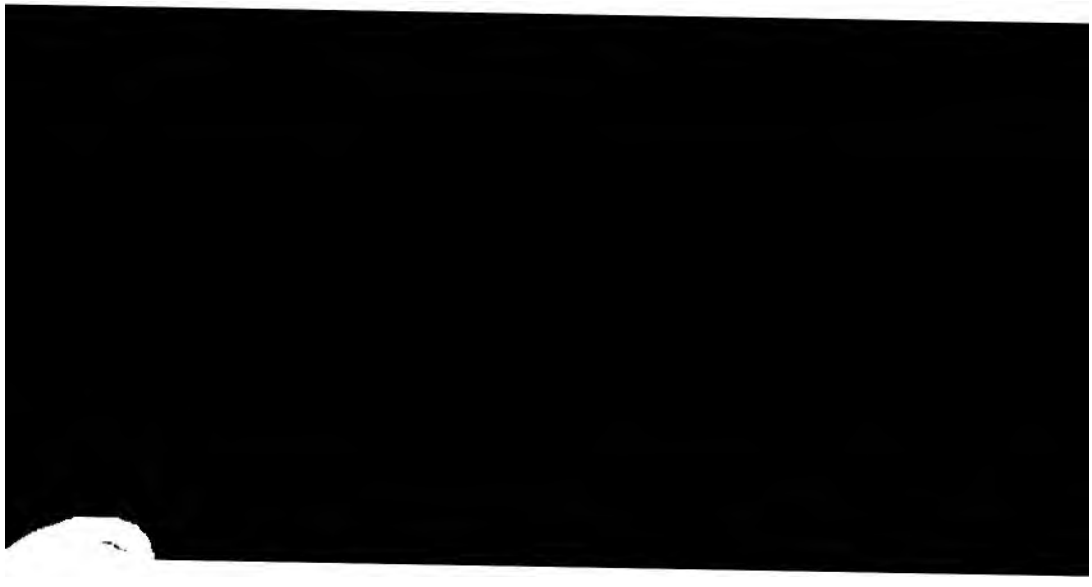
proud to clasp the hand of a coloured scavenger provided there was the remotest chance of finding such a person with a few Jamaican pennies. Your true Dandy is never exclusive; he is an adventurer pure and simple; and he dresses in the highest height of fashion, partly from great vanity and partly because he will not advertise his poverty. Sometimes he meets one of his own tribe, and then Dandy walks with Dandy and there is a heavy music of negro laughter. Together they are bold as half-tamed lions. They accost a white man and ask for a match or a cigarette; they will even raise their tiny hats to the wives of high officials. Then they make a tour round the rum shops and enter each, hoping to find a friend or make a new acquaintance. If they pass the ancient market-women selling sweet stuffs, they will exercise their wit at her expense, and the ends of their slender canes will disturb her fly-blown dainties; if she is not extremely quick of sight, they will thieve a sugar stick or two, and munch them in the open street; they exhibit a profound contempt for the law of petty larceny. Though the sticky stuffs will not improve the condition of their lips and fingers, the dirty face smudges will exhibit to an admiring world the fact that they have eaten luxuriously.

When our pair of gallants meet a lady whose acquaintance they desire, they introduce themselves with a playful prod with their walking-canes; if the damsel should resent this undue familiarity, she must endure a long and loud chorus of personalities. For

the Dude is lacking in the elements of chivalrous refinement. But as a rule the lady is proud to be conquered by such a duet of splendour. She submits to the playful gallantries of the couple, and takes her full part in the round of boisterous persiflage.

Great joy fills the heart of Dandy when a cynical busman sarcastically hails them with "Want a bus, sah?" No matter how fascinating the lady who at that particular moment may be engaging his attention, he steps in the roadway and loudly asks the fare to the swellest hotel he can think of. The grinning busman replies, and then there is much bargaining done in the loudest tones in the public highroad. It is a game of make-believe. The busman pretends that he has found a possible fare, the Dandy pretends that he wanted to be driven to a certain place for a certain sum. Such a scene does not suggest amusement to the Englishman, but it is rare sport to the penniless Dude and superior busman. The end comes only when the busman sees a really possible customer and whips his horse along; then the Dude assumes an air of offended dignity and resumes his conversation with the lady. It is truly a brainless, exquisite Dandy.

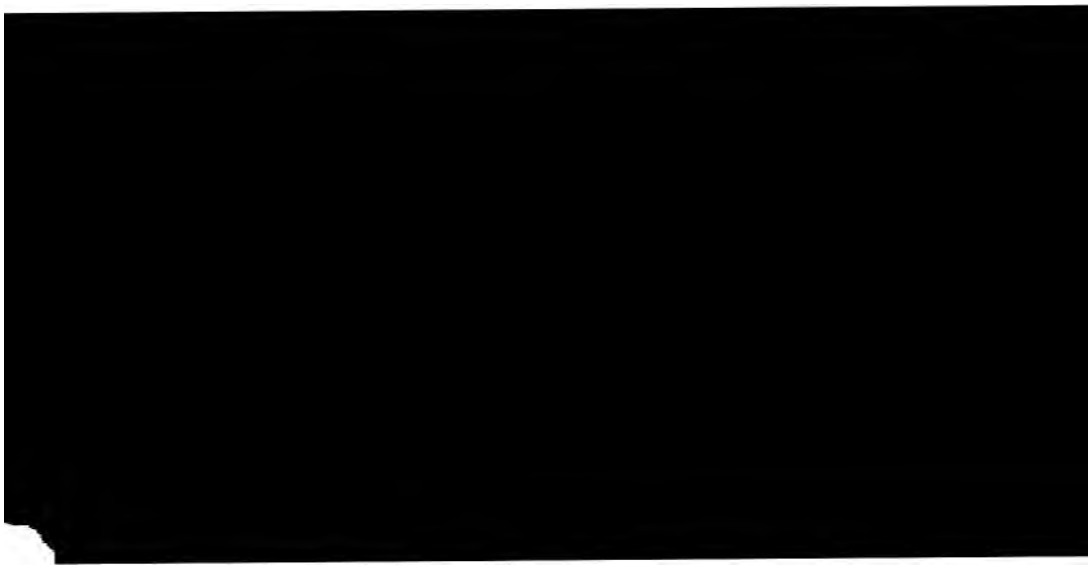
ON THE ROAD TO MARKET, JAMAICA



so adventurous as the Dandy. She is careful in her conversation. A polite accent is her chief ambition. She simpers and lisps and uses pigeon English, and when she is forced to laugh she screens her face with a scented cambric handkerchief. She is a coloured lady, and not the richest, boldest busman dare claim her friendship, though it may be that one of them is her husband. Her friends are among the chapel people; the preachers, the deacons, and the gentleman of the choir. She will condescend to notice West Indian non-commissioned officers, but in doing this she is reaching to her lowest limit. Her ambition is to be counted rich and beautiful. She is a lady of colour and fashion. Call her a negress and she will faint with indignant shame. Her husband is a citizen with a vote, and she is his lady. Though she parades the High Streets her object is simply to be admired. Though she is an absolute coquette, her desire is not to make chance acquaintance with the unimportant natives on the side walks. If a white man, or a rich man who is nearly white, looks and looks again—well that of course is a different matter.

Harmless types, both of them. Both the Dandy and the coloured lady of extreme fashion are amusing, picturesque, and harmless. They have elected to play droll parts in the game of life; it may be that they lack perspective, but certainly they possess great imagination. Their's is a part of make-believe, and they play it with great seriousness.

A HOUSE NEAR THE BOG WALK, JAMAICA



BOG WALK

CHAPTER XIV

BOG WALK

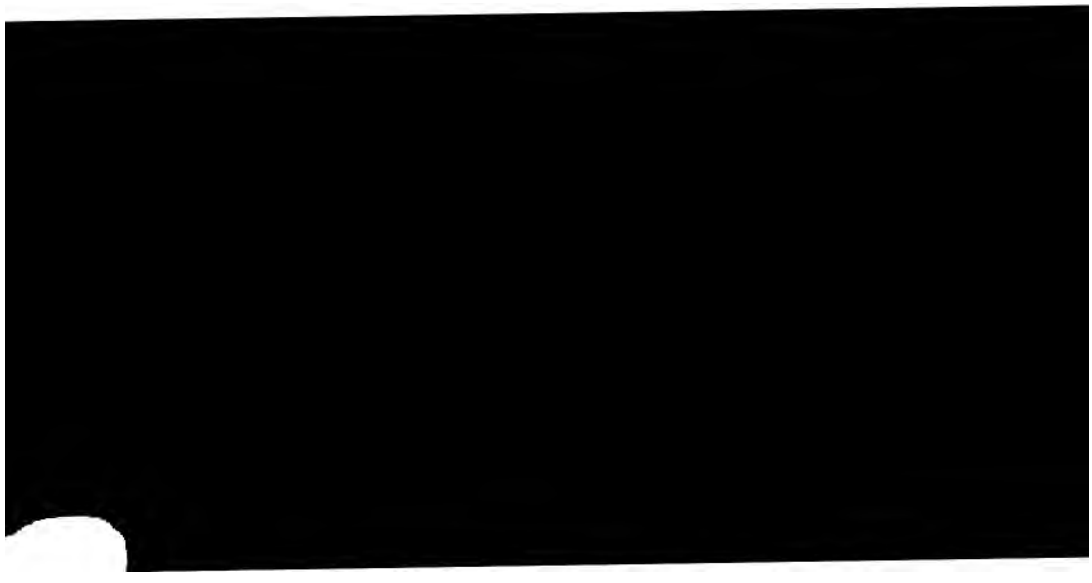
JAMAICA, the land of wood and water, is rich in the possession of countless streams of clear, rushing water. Each of its mountains and rocky hills contains at least one or two fine waterfalls; each of its peaceful valleys is streaked with a silver band of river-water flashing in the sun. To say which of all the rivers might be counted the most beautiful would be to offend a thousand streams, and all the Jamaican districts save one. But this at least can be said. No stream in Jamaica is more beautiful than that part of the Rio Cobra River that flows from Spanish Town, seawards, through the country called by the islanders, Bog Walk.

I know a man who was sent by his English doctor to Jamaica for rest and change. He landed in Kingston and, falling in love with the island, determined to stop for many weeks. After three days he left Kingston for Spanish Town, and there he saw Bog Walk.

His intention had been to stop in Spanish Town one night and then journey farther inland in order to thoroughly explore the country. Spanish Town delighted

him ; Bog Walk fascinated him. He bought a fishing-rod and sat in a punt, anchored in the centre of the Rio Cobra River at Bog Walk, smoking his pipe and catching fish for five weeks. He could not tear himself away. And that was all the Jamaica he ever saw. He had seen Kingston and Spanish Town and Bog Walk, and that he counted quite enough. And who, knowing these places, knowing the Rio Cobra River at Bog Walk especially, would be foolish enough to count my friend foolish. At any rate he saw enough to enable him to say that Jamaica is the most beautiful country in the world. That is his unqualified opinion. To him Jamaica is a white city filled to overflowing with bungalows and coloured people ; and a glorious golden valley rich in tropical trees and fairy flowers which shelter a clear river alive with fish and brilliant weed. For five weeks he lived in Paradise, at peace with all the world. His Jamaica is the memory of that time. For our part we saw the rich Cobra River and drifted down along the shores of Bog Walk in a flat punt, listening to the music of the birds and the melody of the insects ; watching the shadows of heavy trees flirting with the river ripples ; shivering along the dark

DRY HARBOUR, JAMAICA



moments in his school days when he chose corporal punishment in preference to Latin lines. Forrest would not paint them. They were too foolishly ugly. And I will leave them alone and remember only the rich river glades of sunlit water studded with white lilies and aflame with brilliant weeds. I will call to mind the banks filled with palm trees, thin bush-topped giants, straight as arrows or curved like the archer's bow. The palm groves, planted by the mysterious hand of nature in the form of army corps in battle formation; the front-rank trees on either side of the stream engaged in bowing in accordance with the chivalry of romantic forests. The bent trees form a graceful arbour, miles long. The sun, filtering through the palm-tree roof, spangles the river with flashing gems of light. And both banks are cool and soft and filled with scented plants and gaudy blossoms. Occasionally a dragon fly, pursued by twittering birds, flashes ahead, twisting and doubling like tropical lightning. Our punt makes no noise as it floats down stream, guided from the stern by a negro with a bamboo pole. I sit in the bow and watch the little brown, river-tortoise, the water-rats and gleaming fish.

In the water of the Rio Cobra River there is only one thing that is not really beautiful, and that is the tortoise. Made into ornaments for my lady's hair, the shell of the tortoise is full of subtle fascination. But on the back of its mother reptile the shell is coloured like the mud of the Thames at Lambeth; and in the scum that hides the beauty of the shell weeds of the

darkest, dreariest kind grow, like seaweed on an old wooden sailing-ship. When the tortoise swims the weeds trail from his back like a cluster of rats' tails.

Animal life is not in evidence. The most remarkable thing in connection with Jamaica is the fact that, practically, it cannot boast the possession of a single indigenous animal larger than the rat species. The island should be filled with deer. The high bush-covered mountain slopes would give cover to the greatest of the antlered tribe, and here among the trees of the valleys and the water of the clear rivers one can imagine that the quiet pools are the drinking-places of herds of elephants. But Jamaica is barren so far as animals are concerned. Not even a monkey scrambles among the leafy vastness of the heaviest forests, and even in the thickest undergrowth a man may tread with safety.

Large, who in England is a squire and a sportsman, frequently bemoaned this lack of animal life. "Put a herd of deer in each of the forests of Jamaica, and in five years the island will be the sportsman's paradise," he said. And I have no doubt his estimate was correct. I put his opinion on record for the benefit of those who

machette ; we swept beneath a bridge of solid masonry, and in a little time emerged into a great pool of silent water which made our little craft pause, and enabled us to dream in peace. It would be a horrible thing to travel at more than one knot speed down this river of scented beauty.

We remained quietly still and gazed at a scene as glorious as a young child's dream-fairyland. A dream of wood and rock and water, shaded and shrouded by the wildest mass of luxuriant tropical foliage.

This Jamaica is indeed the Queen of the Antilles, the fairest jewel in the golden Caribbean, the land of perpetual music and light and beauty. As I have already written, its name should be God's island. Its beauty cannot be translated by art or word or music. It is a dreamland and a land of dreams.

People talk of its industrial backwardness, its commercial weakness,—of the impossibility of its finances. I myself have written of its commercial future. As well discuss the poverty of the convolvulus or the nakedness of the lily. Jamaica was created by Providence to show mankind something of the meaning of beauty. It was to stand as an explanation of Eden—a glimpse of Paradise. Nature never intended that it should become a rum garden, or even a field for speculative agriculture. It is just a place that should be allowed to stand for ever as the garden of the world ; the vigorous yet languorous Hesperian reflection of all the beauty of the east and west and north and south; the heart and soul of terrestrial beauty. We drifted along,

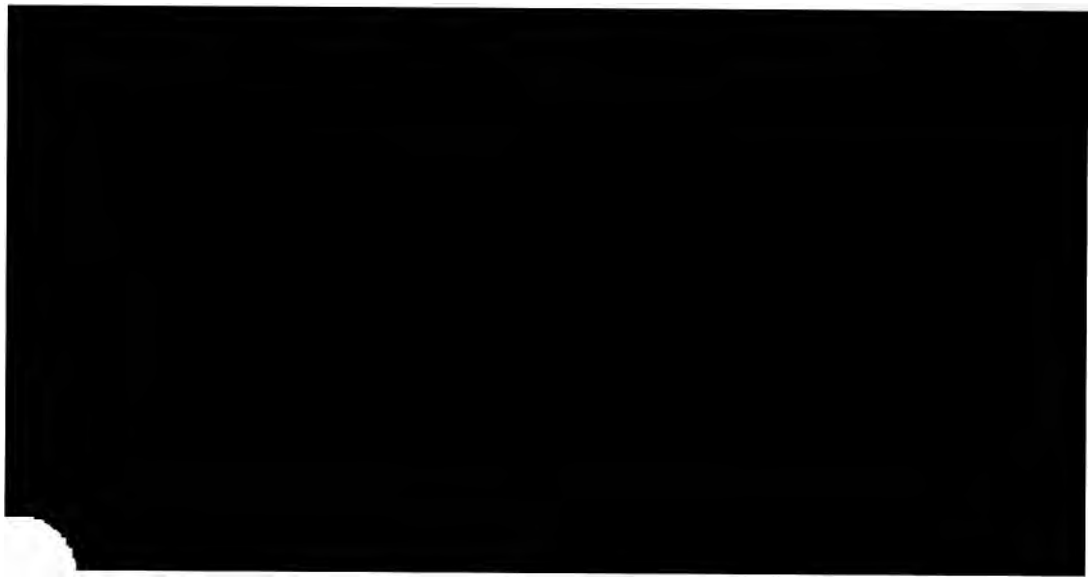
but I know not what else we saw. I remember the place in a hazy manner; my memory serves me as though it were a kaleidoscope whose every piece of broken glass was a glimpse of a new world fitted with joyous life and beauty.

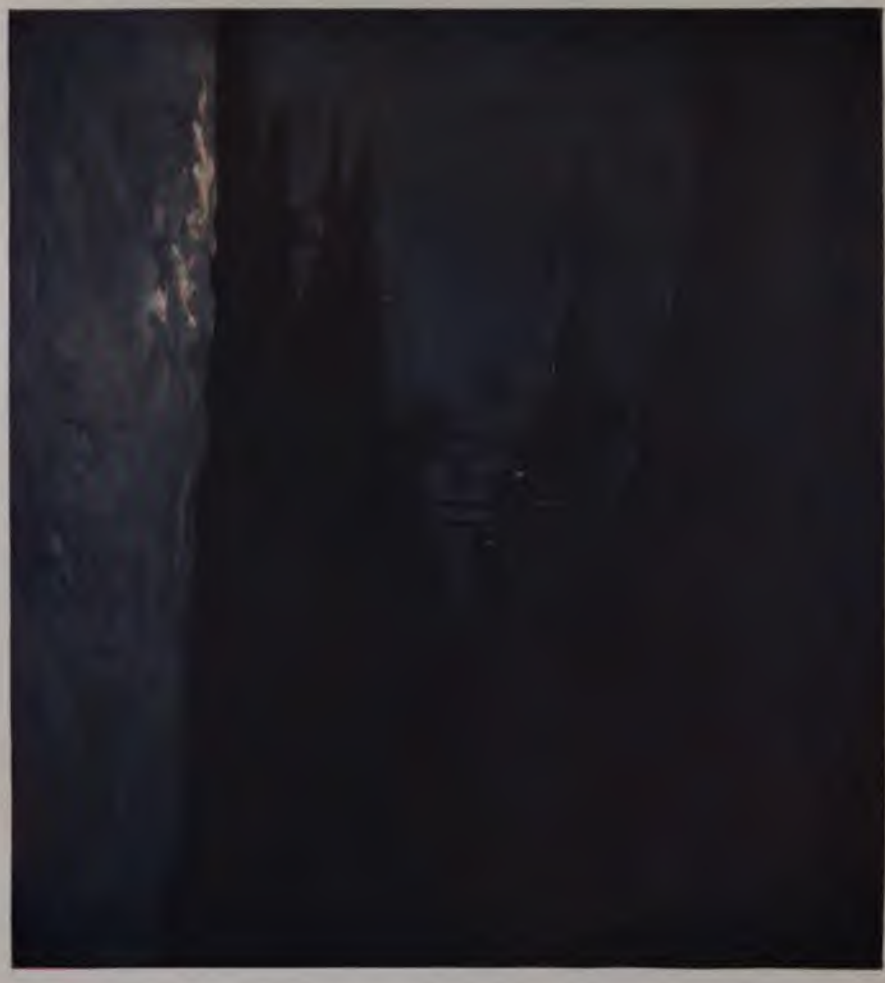
I know that we slipped anchor at last and drank the milk from green cocoanuts. I know that we got into a buggy and drove along a white dusty road and reached a place where a meal was served and eaten. But most of all I remember that across the pools and streams of the Bog Walk gorge of the Rio Cobra River is to be heard the music of the stars and the rich lullaby of the rustling of angels' wings. And Large said it would have been better had there been a few deer about; Forrest had put down his sketch-book with a sigh.

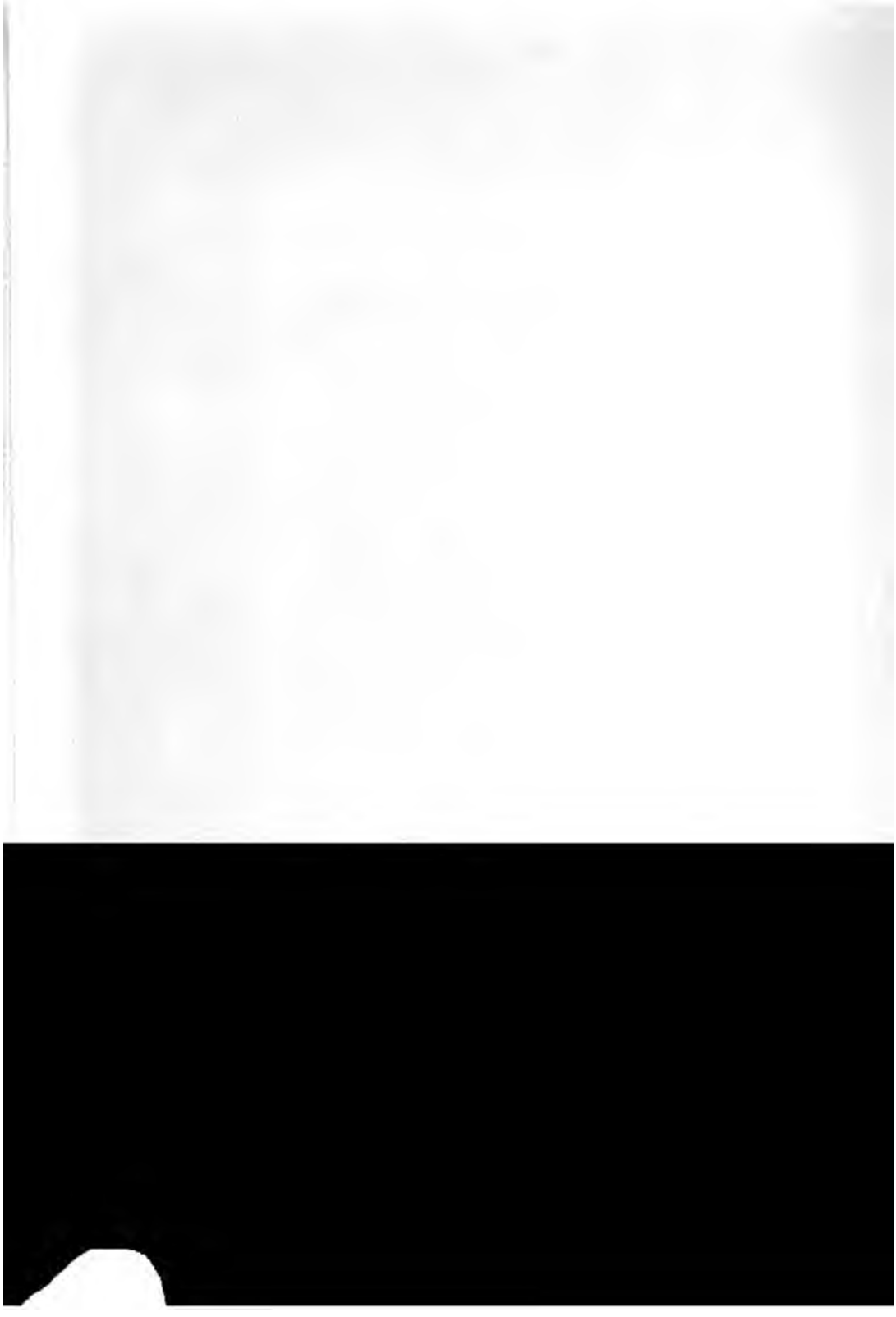
For the rest any Jamaica guide-book will tell you that the flat-bottomed river-boat cost you only a few silver coins.

THE
POLITICS OF A JAMAICAN NEGRO

SUNSET, NORTH COAST, JAMAICA







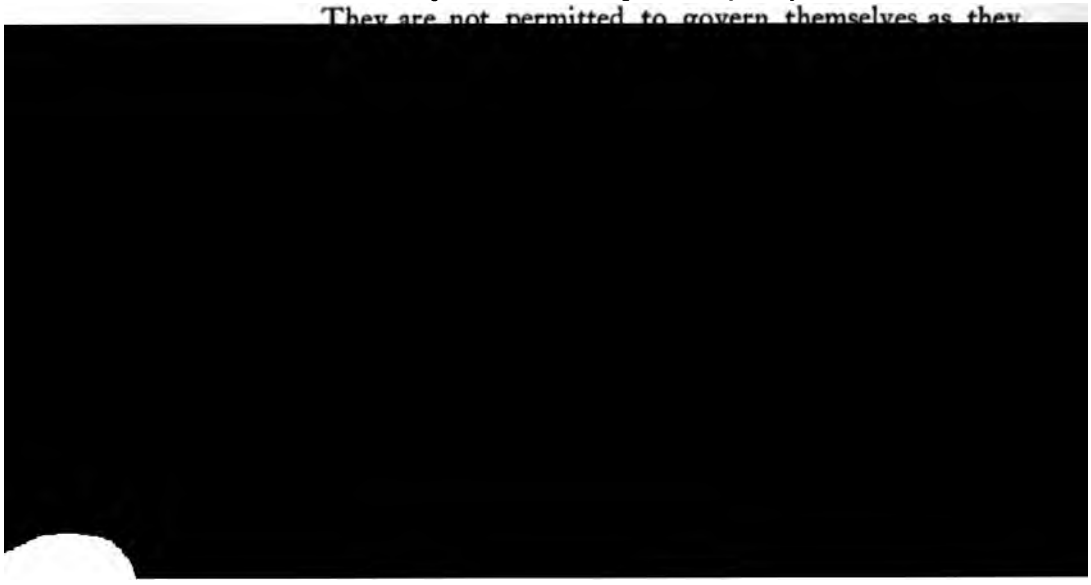
CHAPTER XV

THE POLITICS OF A JAMAICAN NEGRO

I MET him in a country road a few miles out of Spanish Town. He was a well-dressed black, and had that air of sanctity about him which immediately suggests the church of Nonconformity. He wished me good morning with cheerful superiority, and I engaged him in conversation. He was not a parson, but he prayed to God that he was a good Christian and a deacon of His holy Church. He would have discussed every dogma known to Christendom had I been in the philosophic mood. But I led the way to politics, and my friend found congenial ground.

He was an Imperialist and a Protectionist, and withal, he added, a staunch democrat. He believed in God and Jamaica and the negro race. Jamaica for the Jamaicans. It must be a government for the people by the people. Not a fantastical caricature of law-making and liberty which always could be vetoed by a despotic Governor and his clique. He hoped he was loyal to the Crown and to the King of Britain, but his heart bled for his own country and his own race. He was pre-

pared to make Jamaica the horizon of his political outlook. His duty to God was to attend to the needs of the people of his own race and blood settled in the country of their birth. "We black people outnumber you whites by at least forty to one; is it rational that we should always submit to your despotic government? Though the British Government is the cleanest and the most enlightened in the world, neither Imperial Parliament nor a Governor four or five years resident in the colony, properly understands the needs of Jamaica. Since the population is black let the Government be black. The British gave their slaves unconditioned freedom; that was an act for which no negro owes any thanks to Britain. Freedom is the natural right of every individual, whether he is white or black; so the black man owes no thanks to the white for having been permitted to claim his natural heritage of freedom. Rather do the whites owe a great debt to the black for the gross injustice of the slave days." That was a matter he did not wish to press. To-day he and the people of his race are, as individuals, entirely free. His complaint was that politically they were still bound. They are not permitted to govern themselves as they



people. The elected members were returned after having pledged themselves to certain measures. These measures were, in the majority of cases, thrown out by the Governors' permanent legal majority. Government under such conditions was characterised by my friend as being little better than a farce. He repeated his phrase "fantastical caricature of law-making."

"What would you have?" I asked.

The verbosity of his reply was only equalled by its vehemence.

"I would have Jamaica governed as England is governed. The people of this island have every moral right to govern themselves, to frame their own laws and to administer those laws. We are no longer barbarians; we are an educated people with ambitions, and the strength to attain our ambitions. We recognise that it is a fine thing to be a part of the great Empire of Britain, but we recognise, even more clearly, that it is a finer thing to be a free, unfettered nation. England will always have our heartiest support and affection. When we have become a nation and ceased to be a crown colony, Jamaica will always feel that really she is the child of Britain."

"So you anticipate that one day Jamaica will be entirely independent of England?" I asked.

"It is inevitable," he replied. "Already the more educated coloured people feel the bitterness of their semi-dependence. Already the smouldering embers of the fire of absolute freedom are in evidence throughout the land. We are not without our politicians. We

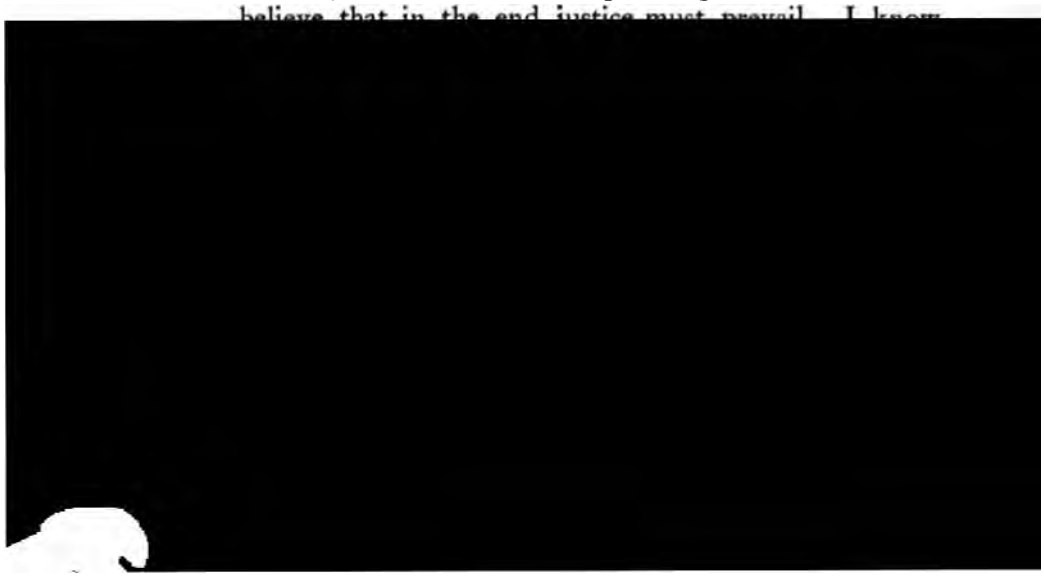
are not without our leaders; perhaps we have not yet found one quite strong enough to lead us on to political victory. We have not found our Cromwell. But, some day, soon, a strong man will appear, and Jamaica will become an independent nation."

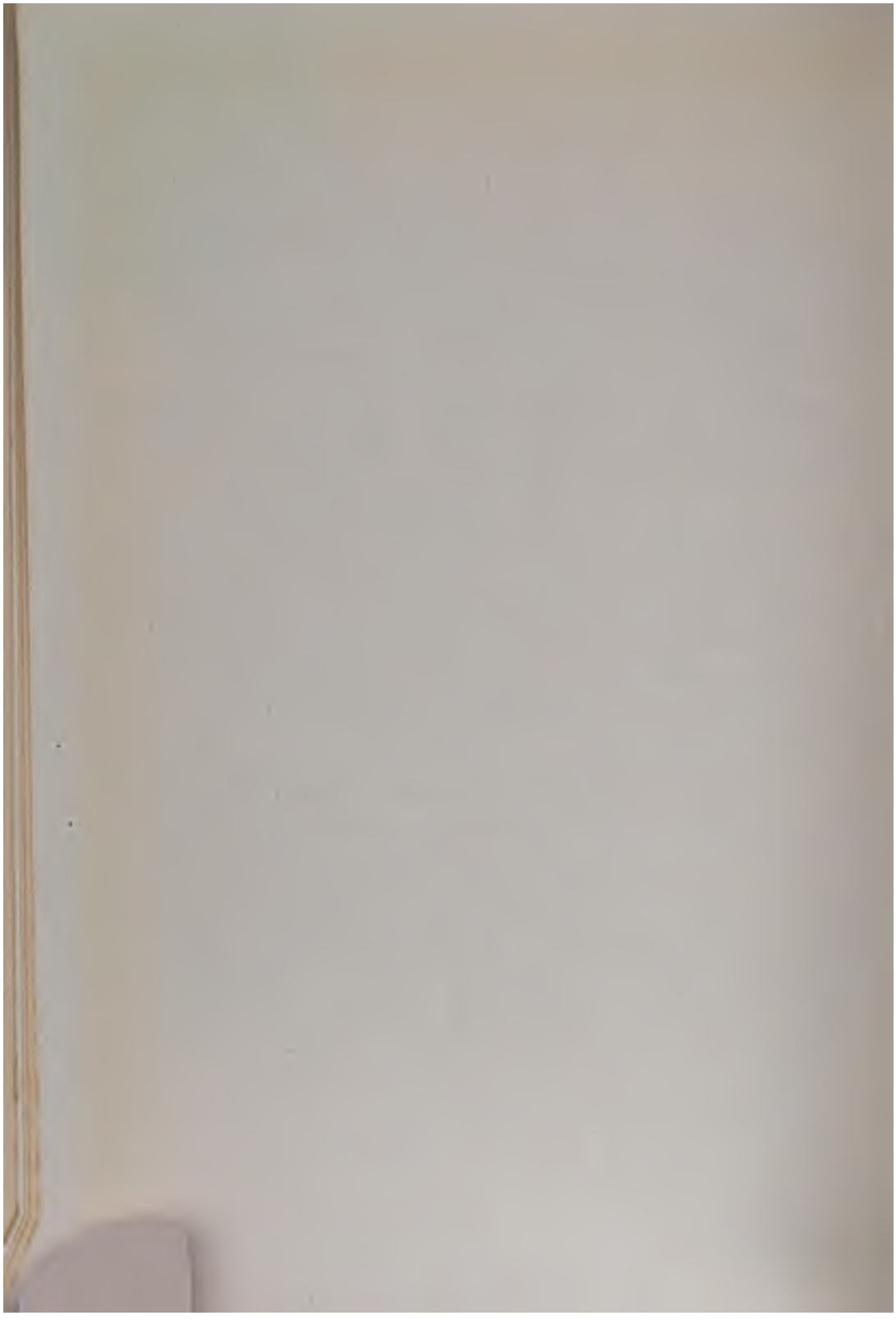
"And what about the white men?"

"They will be unaffected. They will always be made welcome in our country; law and order will prevail under the new system just as it prevails to-day. You English have taught us how to become a great people; you have given us the immeasurable benefit of your religion; you have given us a framework for our laws and constitution. When the time comes for us to make full use of that knowledge, you will find that your wisdom was not thrown to waste."

"But the freedom you aspire to can only come by revolution."

"Political revolution—yes; armed revolution—no. We natives of Jamaica think we frequently see indications in your English Parliament that your Liberal party would not be averse to granting us that freedom which, one day, we shall be strong enough to demand. I believe that in the end justice must prevail. I know





"But England guards the interests of her children, and nearly all the land of Jamaica belongs to English planters."

"The land of Jamaica belongs by natural right to the people of Jamaica."

"You believe in the doctrine of land nationalisation?"

"I believe in the doctrine of justice."

"Would you propose to compensate the planters when you despoil them of their land?"

"That I cannot say. Compensation such as that would be a simple act of grace. Morally it would not be necessary."

I mentioned to him that I had heard much about the annexation of Jamaica by the United States.

"That will never come about," he said. "Jamaicans would not stand it, America does not desire it. But it would be better for America if we were entirely independent."

"Why?" I asked.

"When the Panama Canal is completed Jamaica will be a place of some strategical importance," he replied.

The conversation drifted to the condition of the people. I mentioned that the intelligence of the majority of the coloured people was not equal to the standard of the white.

"There I disagree," he said. "So far we have not produced one great man. We have no great statesmen or warriors or divines. But in the mass our people

compare favourably with the agricultural labourers of England, Germany or France. They are a clean-living, quiet people, easily led and easily governed."

"You know Europe?" I asked.

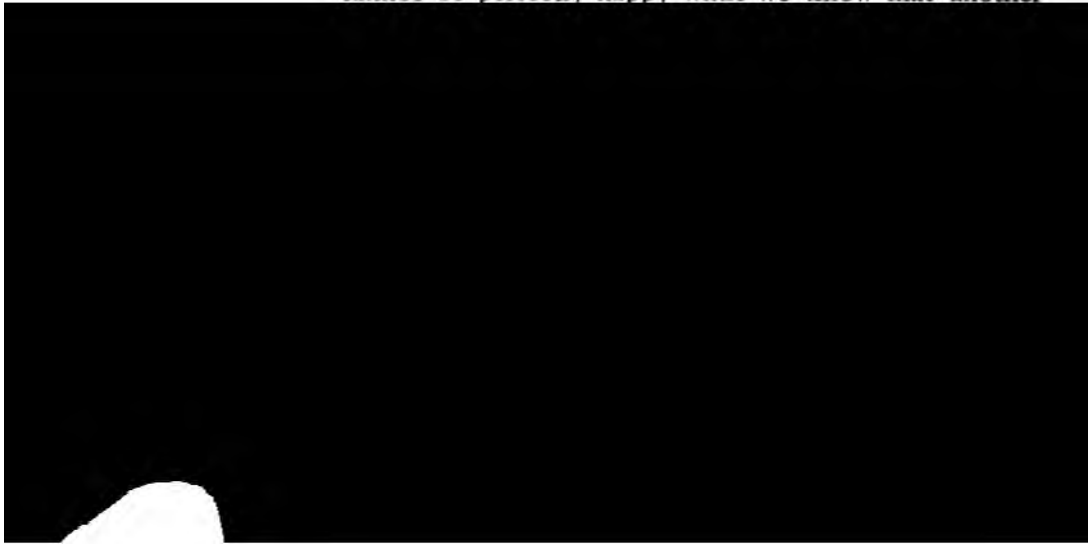
"I lived in England ten years," he replied. "I have been to many of the continental capitals. But my heart has always been in Jamaica. I like my own people best. We live a happier life than any European people, and we are cleaner in our mode of living."

"Yet," I ventured, "the majority of the children born on the island are illegitimate."

"True," he admitted, "but have you seen in Kingston, or anywhere else in the island, any traces of an immorality to equal the wickedness of London, Paris, or Berlin?"

I took refuge in the remark. "If you are so happy why change your condition; why attempt to alter your system of Government, why attempt to become an independent nation?"

"Because we have ambition, and because it is good for any nation that its children shall be eligible for the highest honours the nation can give. As a people we cannot be perfectly happy while we know that another



Perhaps five years, perhaps less than five years, or perhaps it will be a quarter of a century. Your Liberal party may rub out the chalk for us, or——"

"Or," I insisted.

"America may suggest to England that it would be a graceful thing to do."

We walked along together and for some time there was a silence. Then my friend began: "It is the only thing. The only possible solution of the many Jamaican problems. The weakness of the English rule in Jamaica is that the island is governed by those who are paid to govern. The ambition of the majority of the English officials seems to be to earn their money and begone. Jamaica is not their home. Just as I in England always thought of this island as home, and worked in England so that I might return here, so do the English people think of England while living here. It would be foolish to expect anything else. The more ambitious servants of the British Government work hard here, not so much for the good of the place as for the good of themselves. They want to make a noise and distinguish themselves. Their hearts are set on promotion, not on the well-being of the people of the Government. The same applies to some extent to the planters. English planters who have settled in the island feel that they are living in exile. If they cannot make money enough to afford long holidays in England,—if they cannot send their wives to England every year and their children to English schools,—they complain of their poverty. Economically that is wrong; it is not

fair to the country that so much money made in Jamaica should be spent in England. I am a planter—a very successful planter. I make quite enough money to live here in the greatest comfort, but I could not afford prolonged holidays in England, neither could I afford to send my wife and children there. If I were an Englishman I should bewail my fate and call myself a pauper. As it is I count myself rich. I want no more than I have."

"But," I said, "you have your tourists here. Surely more money comes into the island from the pockets of English and American tourists than goes out by reason of the holidays of the planters."

"Yes," he admitted. "But the tourist money goes to the hotel-keepers and retail dealers in the towns. The money the planters take out is taken from the agricultural districts; money which should have been invested in agriculture, spent in improving the sugar plantations and the fruit fields. We cannot hope to become rich because we have rich hotels and flourishing tradesmen. We can hope to become rich if our agricultural resources are developed, if our plantations are improved, and more machinery is imported. The

The Politics of a Negro

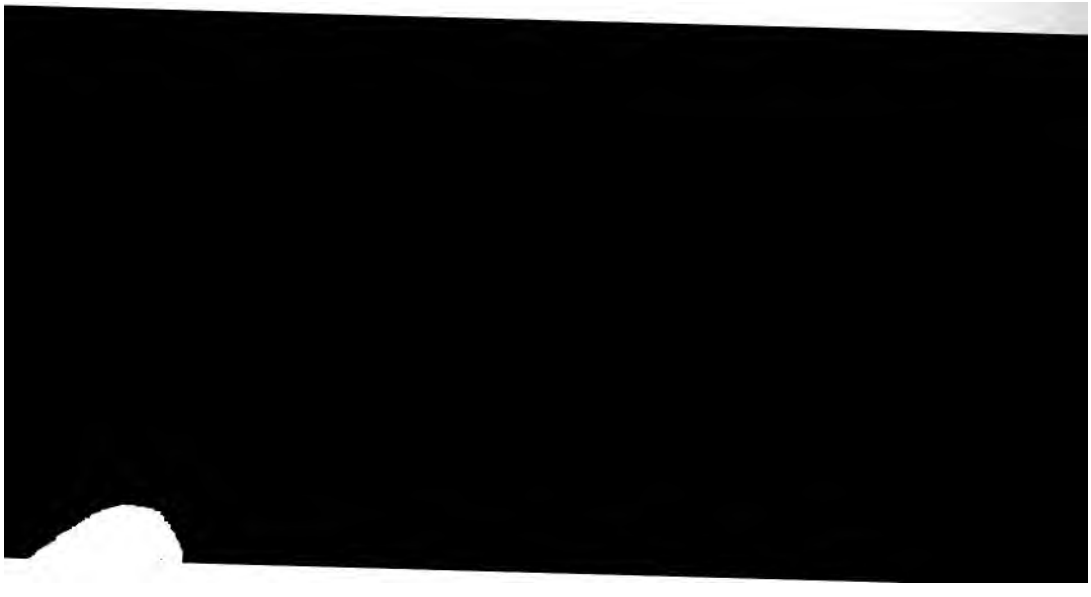
"I see at least one insurmountable difficulty in your path," I said. "Even if your dream of freedom came true, how would you deal with the half-breed population?"

"We should absorb them," he replied. "They are at one with us in our dream of freedom."

"And you can trust them to be at one with you always?" I asked.

"They will be our Irish," he replied.

STEAMERS UNLOADING, BARBADOES



THE WHITE MAN'S POLITICS

CHAPTER XVI

THE WHITE MAN'S POLITICS

I HAVE given at length a political conversation I had with an intelligent and well-informed negro. May I add the record of the talk I had with an important servant of the Government. Though he was not concerned with the actual work of governing, he was a man who had a voice in the affairs of the State, a friend and servant of the Government, a man who could well remember the Jamaica of twenty years ago.

I dined with him in a bungalow pleasantly situated in a Kingston suburb. And I retailed to him the opinions of my friend the coloured reformer.

"Bosh," he said; "stuff and nonsense. Your glib acquaintance was engaged in the delicate art of pulling your leg."

Remembering the earnestness of my companion of Spanish Town country road—remembering his deep seriousness—I disagreed.

"But, my dear fellow, if they tried on that sort of business we should go for them. Eyre strung up Gordon for that sort of thing, and the black fellows have not

forgotten the lesson they were taught then. The black Tommies—who are not all Jamaicans—in Up-Park Camp, and the white troops at Newcastle and Port Royal, would have something to say in the matter of Jamaican freedom."

"How about the intervention of America?"

"So much rubbish. The Yankees have pretty well cornered the trade of the island; the natives count their money in dollars and American notes instead of English sovereigns, and that is about all America wants."

"But what's the good of Jamaica to England if America controls the trade?"

"Give it up my boy. England's got Jamaica and she will have to keep it. Even dear old arrogant Britain cannot do what she likes with her Colonies. There would be a terrible kick-up if we started turning our possessions adrift because they had ceased to be remunerative. Besides, there is still a good trade done with England, and lately fresh British enterprise has done something in the way of increasing the Briton's share."

"But suppose the coloured people were to properly organise, and, under the leadership of a strong man,

"Give it up again, my boy, You know as much about home politics and the colonial policy of the Liberal party as I do."

"Perhaps the Americans would openly side with the blacks?"

"Then not all the Liberal Governments in the world could prevent the shooting."

"You think there is no possibility then of the introduction of home rule for Jamaica?"

"I am sure that if the black people were the absolute governors of the country, not one white man would remain in the country. It would be impossible; look at Hayti! The blacks are utterly incapable of self-government; ten years of independence would reduce a black Jamaica to the level of an inland Gold Coast village. With Jamaica a lawless republic, as well as Hayti, the West Indies would be impossible. America knows that; the Yankees would be the first to cry out against it. No, Jamaica is bound fast to England, and neither England nor Jamaica can undo the binding."

"You think that Jamaica will again become as rich and prosperous as she was in the early days?"

"Why not? The place is rich enough, the climate is good enough. Do you realise what a tremendous upheaval the emancipation of the slaves meant to this little island? The whole economic system was put out of joint. That was only seventy years ago. The old planters who had made great fortunes by means of slave labour were heavily compensated. They saw labour difficulties ahead and sold up their plantations

and cleared out of the island. The consequence was that the country found itself in a pretty mess. Can you wonder that its finances got a bit deranged, and that the Jamaican problem loomed large in the London parliament? The island was in a pretty bad way. The negroes felt the pinch as well, but not so much as the white people. Consequently the negroes began to have grievances, and one or two of them started in business as political agitators. It was about the best-paying business in the island in those days. But as things began to brighten up a bit the negro grievance became less acute, and though the agitators did their best to earn a decent living, they began to become less popular. That is about the size of the affair. Of course the negroes are not all content. As your friend said, they have ambition—at least some of them have. But you can be sure that three quarters of a million black men are not going to seriously upset the British constitution. Yes, I am certain that Jamaica has a most prosperous future. We lack capital and we lack good men. There is room in Jamaica for thousands of good, educated Britons with a bit of capital. And these will turn up some day. Fortunes are being made in

[illegible]

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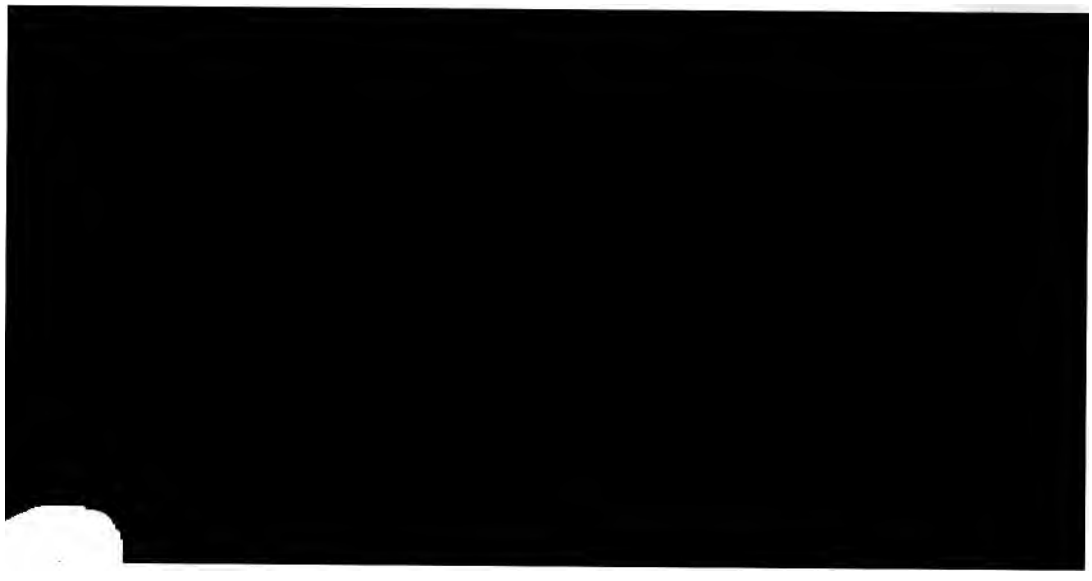
AN EVENING PARTY, ST. THOMAS



are going to be assisted by new British immigrants. I wish you would tell your people that it would pay them a good deal better to come to the West Indies than to go chasing gold mines and diamonds in South Africa and the Transvaal."

"How much capital would a settler want?"

"The more the better of course, but a thousand pounds at least. A good man with a thousand pounds would suit us better than a waster with ten thousand. We don't want any remittance men. Good, solid, hard-working, level-headed business men are the sort for us. People who will send for their wives and settle on their plantations, without wanting to race over to England every year."

"My coloured friend suggested that the tendency on part of the planters to go to England every year was a bad thing for the island."

"And there he was right, of course. We want absolute settlers—men who will adopt the country and call it their home, and count it as their children's homeland too. We want a solid population of solid white men—not a migratory people who look for fortunes in ten years and then a suburban home near London. I guarantee that any man of the right sort who comes here in the right spirit will never regret his coming."

"And when he comes, what must he do first of all?"

"Hire himself out as a book-keeper or overseer on some plantation for a year or so, until he has got the hang of the country. After that he can decide matters

THE WHITE MAN'S POLITICS

A ROADSIDE MARKET, JAMAICA

THE RAILWAY IN JAMAICA

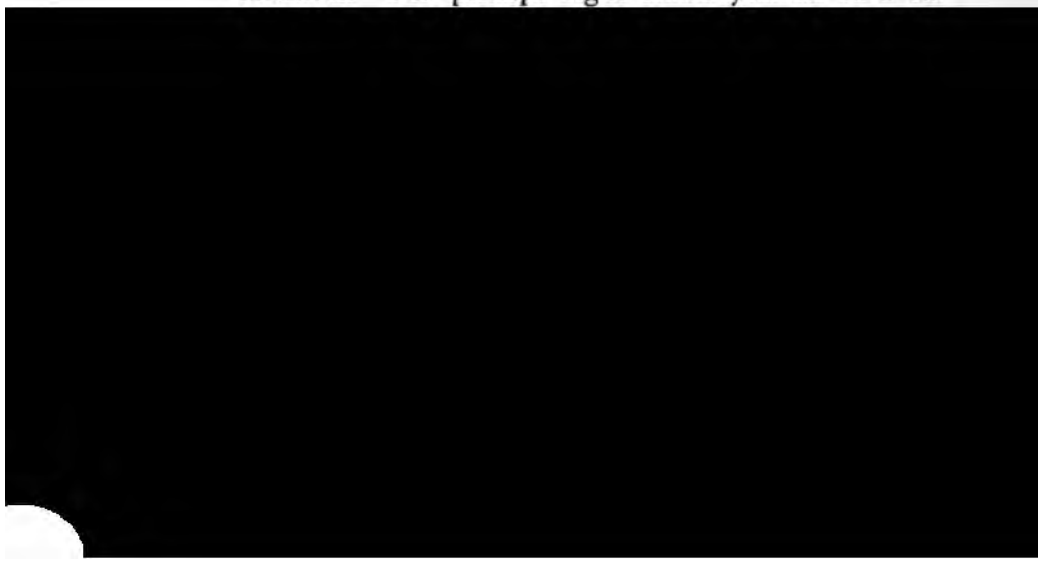
CHAPTER XVII

THE RAILWAY IN JAMAICA

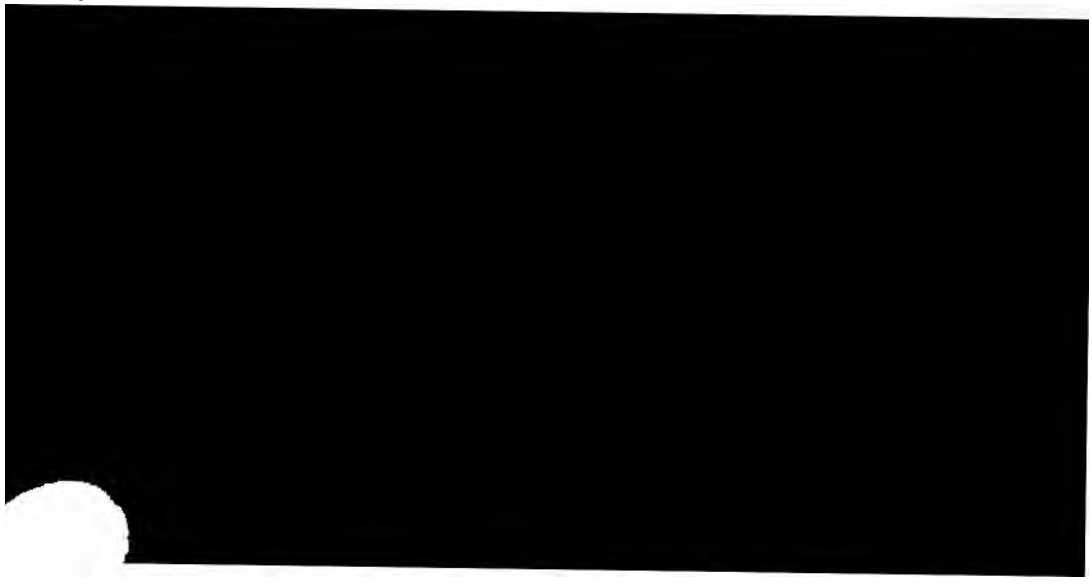
In Jamaica there is a railway which carries passengers of the first and second class in carriages that would not necessarily disgrace even the London, Chatham, and Dover line in England. The upholstery of the carriages is of heavy stuffed leather; the fitments are of polished yellow wood; and the result infinitely more suitable for an Arctic clime than for merry sweltering Jamaica. There are, as I have stated, two classes; to these I must add the soda-water compartment, which is a sort of betwixt and between of both classes. A place where the men (sometimes the ladies also) foregather to sit on empty soda water boxes and consume mineral waters and eat fruit. This is the saloon of the railway —the drawing-room of travelling Jamaica. Here the guard sits always, and with him the coloured lady who sells the mineral water at a truly reasonable rate. The carriages are reserved for the uninitiated, or the respectable, of both classes. The soda-water room is always full of scandal talk; a half hour's ride in this compartment of any train will teach any tourist the inner

history of Jamaican society in a manner quite incapable of repetition or reproduction. The lady who sells the ginger beer is conversant with the character, the salary, the peculiarities and home life, of every person living in the island. She is the natural historian of the country. In three sentences she can destroy the reputation of a mansion; half an hour suffices for the moral destruction of a town. One day, even half a day, among the empty ginger-beer boxes kills every desire, no matter how ambitious one may have been, to enter the ranks of the upper ten of the society in the Queen of the Antilles. The reason for all this is the heat and discomfort of railway travelling in the tropics. The dust and sweat of travel jaundice a man's outlook on life; and in the railway train a white face looks dull yellow. So it is with the cleanest reputation. And fortunately the soda-water gossip is forgotten even before one's hair has ceased to smell of cinders.

The journey inland over the steel rails should only be undertaken at great provocation. It is not a desirable thing to do, although it is the quickest, the cheapest, and the most usual way of covering long distances. For perhaps eight hours you sit *vis-à-vis*



THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROYAL MAIL STEAMER,
DOMINICA



tions rushing towards the place you have just left behind.

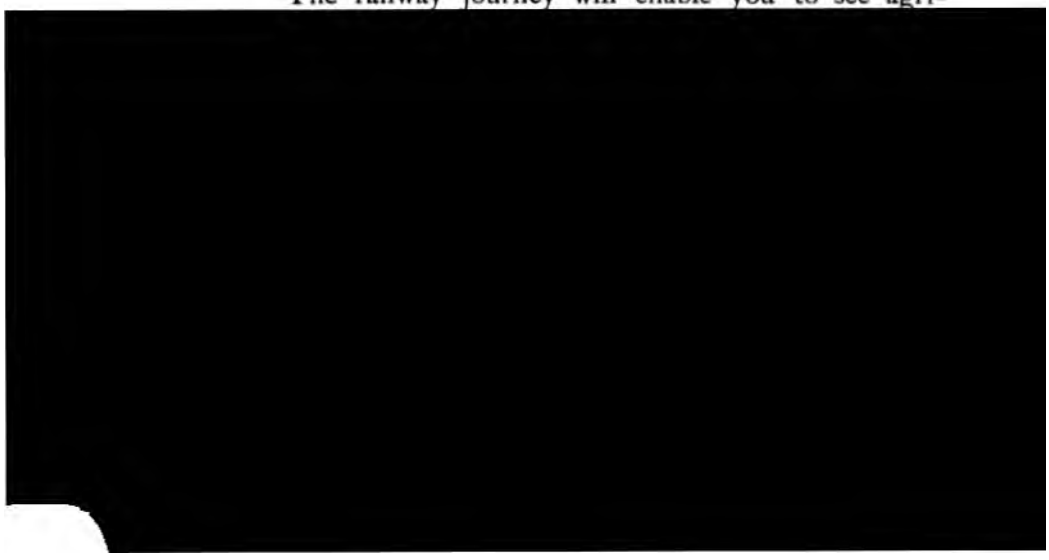
Jamaica is proud of its railway. The people of the country, remembering the difficulties of its building, and the frequent weaknesses of its finances, are glad the line is complete, and that it is possible to travel at good speed from one end of the island to another. In truth the history of the line from its beginning in 1845 to the present day is not lacking in interest. Parts of the track have been built by official and parts by private enterprise. The Government, I believe, started the building, and an American syndicate carried it forward. The American syndicate failed, and so the railway fell into the hands of the Government again, and there it has remained ever since. The carriages are miniature editions of the American saloons, and, in my opinion, are capable of vast improvement. Otherwise the stock is excellent, and the lines and curves and bridges everything that could be desired.

Starting from Kingston, you can travel over a hundred miles of looped, single-track line to Montego Bay, or over thirty miles to Ewarton or seventy miles to Port Antonio. These are the three routes; the track to either of the places named is, of course, strewed with wayside stations. No matter which way you travel you will pass through most marvellous country. You will rattle across iron bridges, spanning rushing streams or wide romantic rivers. You will skirt great lagoons, half overgrown with mangrove and other swamp-land trees. You will steam across great yellow-

green guinea-grass pastures, and then, by way of wonderful gradients, you will climb mountain chains and, from the dizzy height of your carriage window, look down at distant valleys half-screened by the green foliage of impenetrable forests. You will pass smoothly through delightfully cool forests, and wonder at the prodigality of nature when you cut through prairie land ablaze with the blooms of rare plants. You will in addition smell all the smells of the Indies, and you will be half-choked by the smoke and dust of the engine.

Natives will grin at you from the hedgerows, and labourers will cease work in the plantations to stare open-mouthed at the incomprehensible railway train. You will pass homesteads and sugar mills, fruit farms and stockyards. Large-hatted planters will ride along roads skirting the railway track, and they will play with their ponies and give exhibitions of their horsemanship for the sake of any lady passenger who may or may not be your companion. The black guard, or conductor, will come and examine your ticket at every other station ; and at most stopping places a little crowd of negroes will stare at you through the carriage window.

The railway journey will enable you to see agri-



will charm him, and the pimento groves will remind him of English orchards. When the bamboo forests and the straggling palms come in view, he will remember with great contentment that he is in the tropics indeed. The birds and the butterflies are shy of the noise and mess of the locomotive, but still the traveller may see enough of the beauty of the fluttering insects to teach him something of the loveliness which is born beneath the shelter of tropical foliage. If he is fortunate enough to see a tiny humming bird sipping from the cup of a scented blossom, he will have seen that which will persuade him to sit in a flower-spangled hedgerow for hours in order that he may witness the picture again.

It is said, and I have put it on record, that Columbus crumpled a piece of paper in order to give his patron a correct impression of the appearance of the island. It is the crumpled, irregular, casual Jamaica that the railroad traveller sees. The valleys, the plateaus, the hills, the mountains, rivers and ravines, pass along the carriage window in bewildering succession; the views one sees are beautiful and mystical beyond comprehension—like the tints in a stormy sunset.

One thing at least the intelligent traveller will learn on his railway journey; he will realise that the beauty of the tropics can never be comprehended by the finite mind of man. He will thank God for the beauty he has seen, and if he is a wise man, there he will allow the matter to rest. To attempt to catalogue the beauties of Jamaica is a task too infinitely foolish: as well essay an analysis of a moonbeam.

A QUAY, ST. ANN'S BAY, JAMAICA

ALLIGATOR SHOOTING IN A WEST INDIAN SWAMP

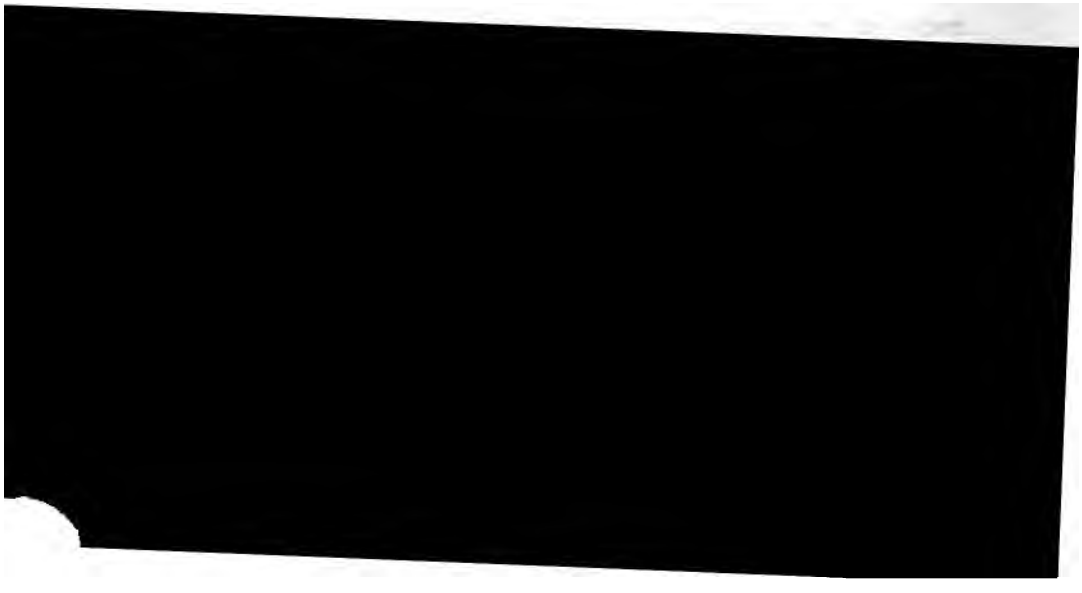
CHAPTER XVIII

ALLIGATOR SHOOTING IN A WEST INDIAN SWAMP

JAMAICA is a land of perpetual peace and sunshine. The hills and valleys of this, the most beautiful of all the fair islands of the West Indies, are always clothed in a great profusion of the richest greenery; its soil gives birth to almost every luscious fruit the world contains; the sweet scents of its myriad blossoms give to the land an atmosphere of the wildest loveliness; yet it is a country almost entirely barren of native animal life. Birds there are in great numbers, and insects too; fish of many kinds swarm in the rivers and mountain torrents, but the languorous climate of the Queen of the Antilles gives shelter to no four-footed game of the plains or forest lands. The place has no claim on the hearts of sportsmen.

It is stated that there are a few wild pigs still roaming at large in one or two of the forests in the north of the island, and certainly there are a few alligators to be found among the swamps at the mouth of the Rio Cobra River in Kingston Bay. But the prospect of finding a boar or two, and the certainty of

OUTHOUSES ON A PLANTATION, JAMAICA



companies, even battalions, by the malarious exhalations of those swamps in which to-day we went to shoot the alligator. Seen from our little boat, Kingston, just missing the deep shadow of the great mountain range which overhangs the town, lay green, and gold, and white in the pale glare of the sun. Fronting Kingston, Port Royal, a tiny strip of sand, be-palmed and dotted with houses, lay symbolic of the Caribbean coral reef. In line with Port Royal, but towards the lagoon, Fort Augustine lay enshrouded in gloom, as though brooding over the tragedy of its own sad history. And beyond the Fort, a great half-circle of the giant harbour, we saw the swamp land—Hunts Bay and the mouth of the Rio Cobra—a flat stretch of sand, yellow deepening into mud colour as it left the sea, and then breaking into scrub, and low grass, and spikey bush. Among the grass and the bush, and even through gaps of the high tree-land beyond, one caught glimpses of dull water, silent and murky and very still.

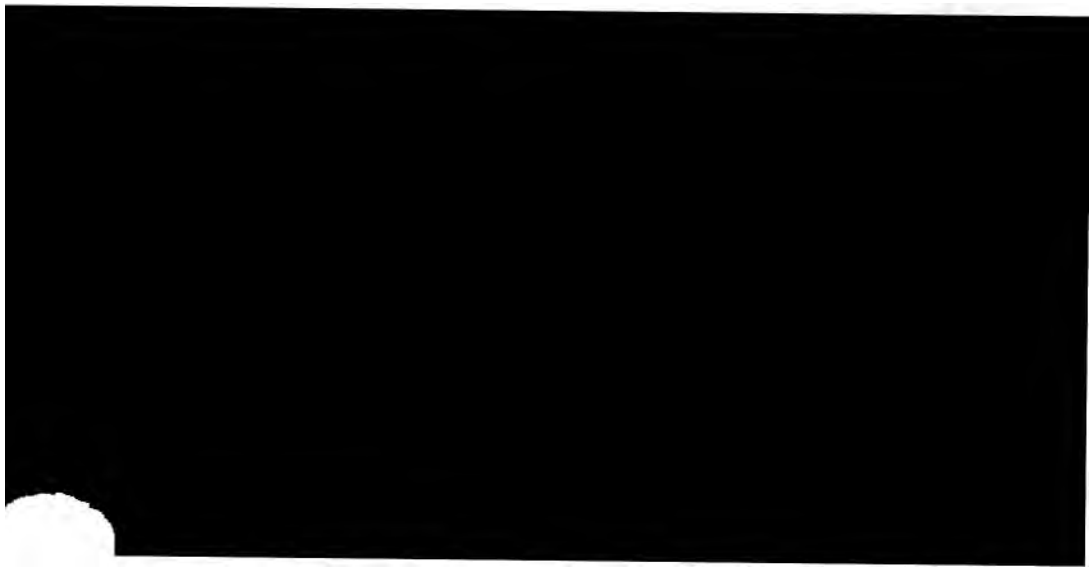
We anchored the boat and waded ashore, the clean water reaching our arm-pits. In this manner we reached the fever-hole of Jamaica; the home of every insect pest the West Indies can produce, the place in which the Jamaican alligator still lives and moves and has its being. Not a pleasant spot either to linger in or look upon, just evil swamp-land, with the evil stench of damp vegetation and rotting wood. You step from the sand of the seashore into brittle stubble, through which the water surges as you pass. You squelch to the river-bank over rotting weed, ankle-deep in slime,

So our party divided, and I went with the black man and squatted against the stump of a rotting tree overhanging the river and waited. Fortunately the hunter did not object to my pipe, and the smoke did something towards relieving me of the clouds of insect pests. Conversation was not permitted. My companion knelt motionless, his eyes straining riverwards; and I, inspired by his eagerness as well as by my own curiosity, watched also.

The spit of mud that separated us from the river was covered by a surface crust of grey-black sediment, hardened by the sun; from where we sat a double line of little pools filled with soft inky slime stretched to the water, and showed the direction of our coming. I examined the surface of mud bay, and noticed that ours was not the only spoor. Ten yards to my right I saw a place where very recently a heavy body had rested—a mark which might have been left if a tree trunk had been removed. I touched the black man on the shoulder and pointed to the spot. He grinned and nodded. Evidently the marks were familiar to him.

I placed my rifle across my knees and waited. The

MID-DAY HEAT, JAMAICA

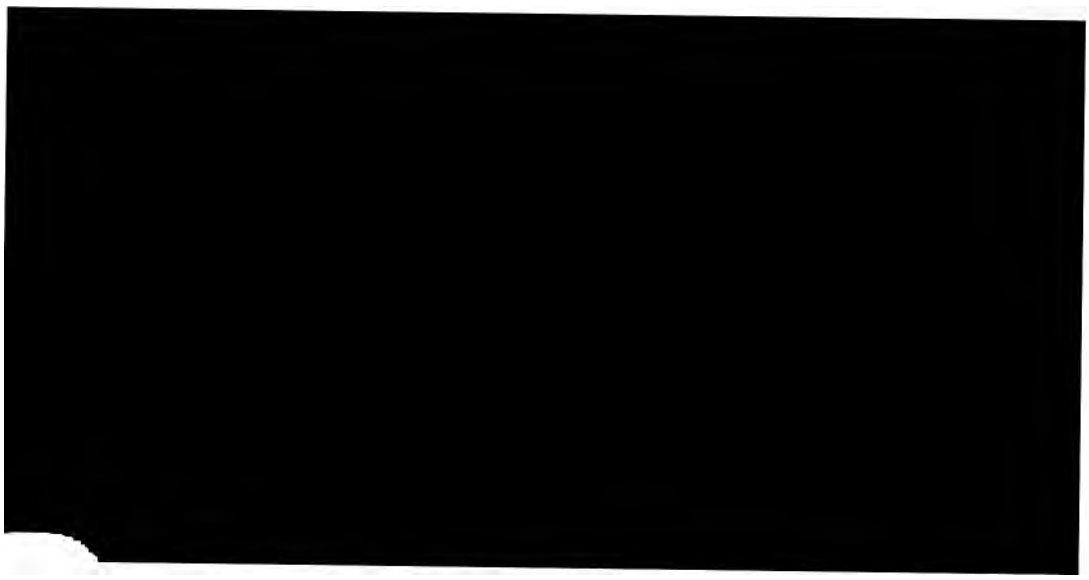


water turned and ceased. And my companion scowled. The noise of a distant rifle-shot came like the muffled noise of a pop-gun, and then a green-black snout lifted itself above the water in midstream a few yards to our right. Behind the snout a long black body appeared, only partly submerged, and I made out the head and tail of an alligator. Slowly it drifted towards the mud patch on which we were waiting. Presently a long snout and a mud-encrusted head reached out of the water and rested on the bank, and our gruesome enemy was within easy reach of our guns. Not fifteen yards divided us. His little eyelids flickered like those of a nervous lizard, and his sinister jaws were open just wide enough to show the long line of white teeth. I brought my rifle round very slowly, and fired from where I sat. The alligator twisted with the swiftness of a cat and dived. I stood still and waited. The troubled water showed that he had been hit; I could mark the direction of his flight by the fury of his struggle. Once he lifted himself half out of the stream, and I fired again. The result was a mad plunge towards the shore on which we stood. I started back, but ere the beast found land, the water swirled again, and I knew that he had turned aside. I followed him with my eyes, and in midstream saw him churning the water with his tail and then plunging round in circles; then he dived to the right, and I saw him no more.

"Him gone now," said my guide. "You should have waited until him come right up to the shore."

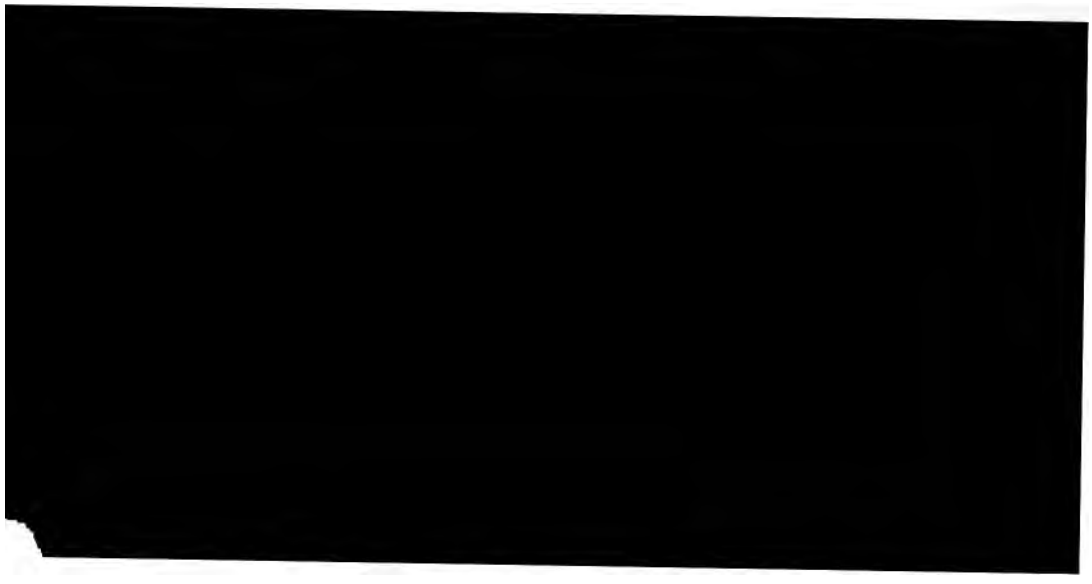
I relit my pipe, and we retraced our steps.

A FRUIT-SELLER, BARBADOES



A. S. Forsyth
JUNE 20th 1924
BARBADOS.

A FRUIT-SELLER, BARBADOES



BARBADOS.

COMMERCIAL JAMAICA

CHAPTER XIX

COMMERCIAL JAMAICA

THOSE sanguine friends of the West Indies who think that the abolition of the beet bounties necessarily means the industrial salvation of Jamaica, forget that the beet bounties did not destroy West Indian sugar industry, but only accentuated and accelerated a decay which had already commenced long before their institution. Even before a beneficent home Government allowed those European countries concerned in the cultivation of the beet to create bounties which have helped to send the British West Indies staggering to ignominious bankruptcy, the dry rot had already attacked West Indian sugar.

At the time of Jamaica's prosperity, foreign sugars were admitted into English markets only on payment of a duty of something like £60 per ton; even the produce of other British sugar colonies was taxed to enrich the West Indian planter. The Jamaican planters felt aggrieved when, in 1836, the East and West Indian sugar duties were assimilated; but when England imported foreign sugar on the same terms as

that produced in British colonies the planters were filled with despair. On top of this grievance came the decree of emancipation, and the total disorganisation of the West Indian labour market.

For centuries Jamaica had waxed rich. In addition to a magnificent soil, the planters had enjoyed "free" labour, ready markets, protection, and high prices. Within a period of twenty or thirty years, with one exception, all these advantages were swept away. The wonderful qualities of the soil alone remained to encourage the despondent planter to work on in hope of better times. From being the "protected" he became the outcast; in place of being the absolute master of his workmen, he found himself entangled in endless labour disputes; and his markets, once so wonderfully capacious, dwindled almost to vanishing point.

Previous to the year 1836, the period of the beginning of the "equalisation" of the sugar duties, the industrial condition of the island was excellent, and the Jamaican planter was apparently entirely prosperous. I say "apparently" purposely, for if we examine Gardner's *History of Jamaica*, published in 1873, we find that the actual position of the proprietors of many

A WAITER

or the mortgagees or receivers, and 55 have been abandoned, though 47 have been newly established during the same period. The returns of the Provost-Marshal from 1772 to 1791 showed great pecuniary embarrassment among vast numbers in the colony. Astounding as it may appear, 80,021 judgments, amounting to £22,563,786, had, during that period, been lodged at his office. . . ." So much for the condition of the planters during the period of Jamaica's greatest prosperity.

The reason for the gradual decay of Jamaica may be read between the lines of this report. In spite of prolific soil and wide markets, in spite of inexpensive labour and the inflated prices obtained for his produce, the Jamaican planter was constantly in difficulties—I had almost written because of these things, and it will easily be seen that the very things which made the country rich helped to impoverish the character of the man. Life was too easy for the planter; he encountered few difficulties; his business conducted itself. If a crop happened to be poor, prices were increased to make up the difference, and the planter did not suffer. His plantation produced sugar which was sold at a fabulous figure; his slaves did the work his overseers ordered them to do; for the rest, he was the most generous, the most hospitable, and the most indolent of mortals. This was the type of man called upon to face a situation of extraordinary difficulty. No wonder he allowed himself and his country to slip down to despair and desolation.

Since the beginning of its distress, Jamaica has lost between 500 and 600 of its sugar plantations. The industry, once so rich and prosperous, has become crippled and starved, and for many years Jamaica lay half derelict, half forgotten.

The Jamaicans made no serious effort to stem the tide of their ebbing fortunes. They talked a lot, petitioned a lot, and grumbled a lot, and then they failed. There is no doubt that a little energy and enterprise would have materially altered the commercial history of the island. To-day, even though the majority of the sugar estates of Jamaica waste over 30 per cent of sugar by their antiquated system of crushing, the planters still manage to make both ends meet and keep a balance on the profit side.

Sugar bounties, Free Trade, labour troubles, antiquated machinery and 30 per cent loss notwithstanding, sugar planters still manage to eke out an existence. If the new methods of manufacture that some of the more enterprising of the planters are now beginning to try had been introduced fifty years ago, the history of the island would not be one of failure and famine.

The problem representing the most serious difficulties

masters, things worked smoothly enough ; crimes were committed, hundreds of thousands of people were abased and downtrodden, but still the island of Jamaica was free from labour troubles. Then came the Liberation Act. The slaves were released, and the majority of them threw away their industry with their bondage, and sat in the sunshine thanking their gods all day long. No doubt the primary cause of the unsatisfactory condition of the labour market which prevailed for many years was the action of the planters themselves. Enraged at their loss of authority, for the most part they turned the full measure of their anger on the wretched freed slaves.

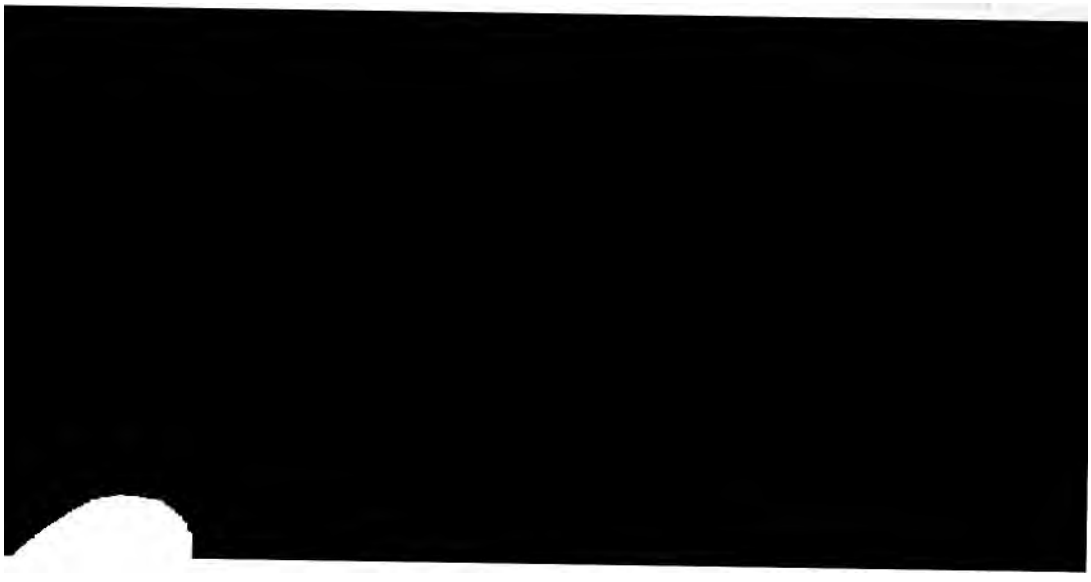
When the Act came into force, meetings were held by planters at which rates of wages were fixed,—needless to remark, on the lowest possible scale,—and masters who had been humane, even kind, to their slaves became overbearing and impossible employers. Enormous rents were charged for labourers' cottages, heavy fines were levied, and frequently the poor negro found that he had no wage to draw for his week's work. Naturally enough, the natives became impatient of labouring under such conditions, and many of them refused to work. The planters then resorted to forcible ejectment. The discontented worker was flung into the open road, destitute and helpless, to get his living when and how he could. This was the beginning of the alienation of the labourers from the estates. The negro found it easy to live on the produce of a patch of land, and it became increasingly difficult to persuade him to

work on a plantation. Slavery was impossible—it could not last; and inconvenient as the abolition has been to Jamaica, its chief evils have happily already vanished. There is to-day little difficulty in obtaining plenty of labourers for the plantations, and if he is treated fairly the free negro makes at least as good a servant as he did in the days of slavery.

Because of the injudicious action of the planters at the time of the slave liberation, much money has been spent by Jamaica in assisting coolie immigration. It is difficult for one who has recently visited the West Indies to imagine that it was ever necessary for Jamaica to import coolie labourers. The negro to-day is willing to work for any man who will treat him decently and pay him fairly and regularly. But necessary it was a few years back, and in Jamaica are to be found to-day many East Indians who thrive in the island, and do much useful labour in a characteristically unostentatious manner.

The commercial salvation of Jamaica rests entirely with the people of Jamaica. The abolition of sugar bounties, even the institution by this country of a system of preferential tariffs founded on protection,

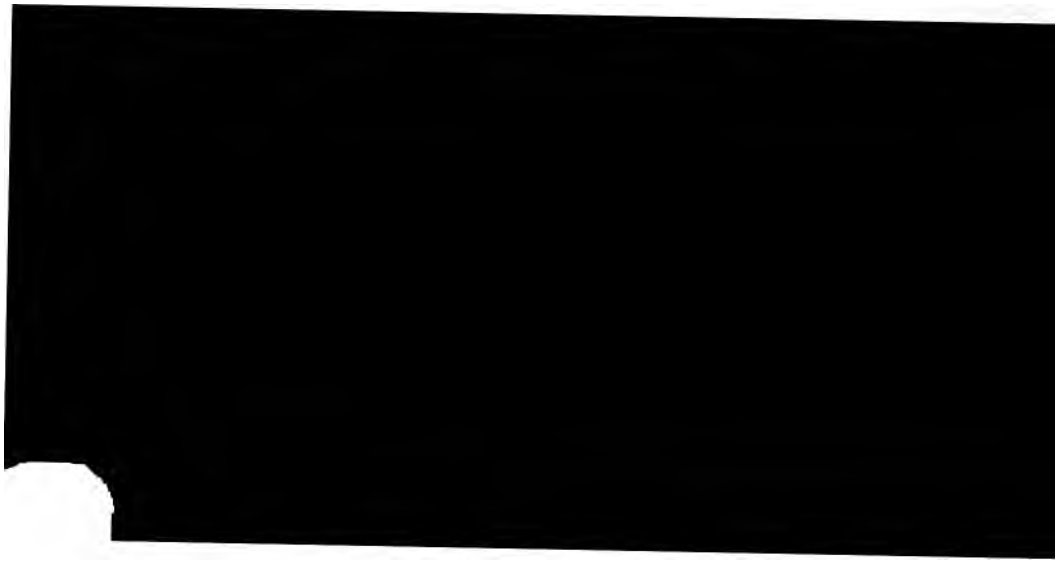
THE MARKET-PLACE, BARBADOES



policy ever imagined. If there were more intelligent, unprejudiced Englishmen to employ and direct the natives, labour difficulties would quickly cease to exist. The great need of Jamaica is men—strong, young, intelligent, enterprising Britishers. There is room for them in their thousands.

One of the first impressions one gathers on landing in the colony is that, though British in name, the place is really quite American as it is British. This is a condition of affairs to be expected, since the United States take about four-fifths of the total exports of the island, and supply more than 50 per cent of her imports. It may be worth repeating that the well-worn story of the agitation in Jamaica favouring the annexation of the island by the United States is now entirely played out. Even if the majority of the people of Jamaica demanded annexation, England would not permit it, and even if England favoured the scheme, the United States would not countenance it. The wily Yankee is content to find in Jamaica a profitable market; it pays better to leave her politics and domestic difficulties severely alone. The American has already grasped the fact that there are dollars in Jamaica. The fruit trade, now probably the most important in the island, has been built up almost entirely by American enterprise and American capital. It is only within the last year or two that English capital has been invested to any great extent in this direction, though the trade has been of growing im-

A TERRACE GARDEN ON THE HILLS, JAMAICA



THE FLORA OF JAMAICA

CHAPTER XX

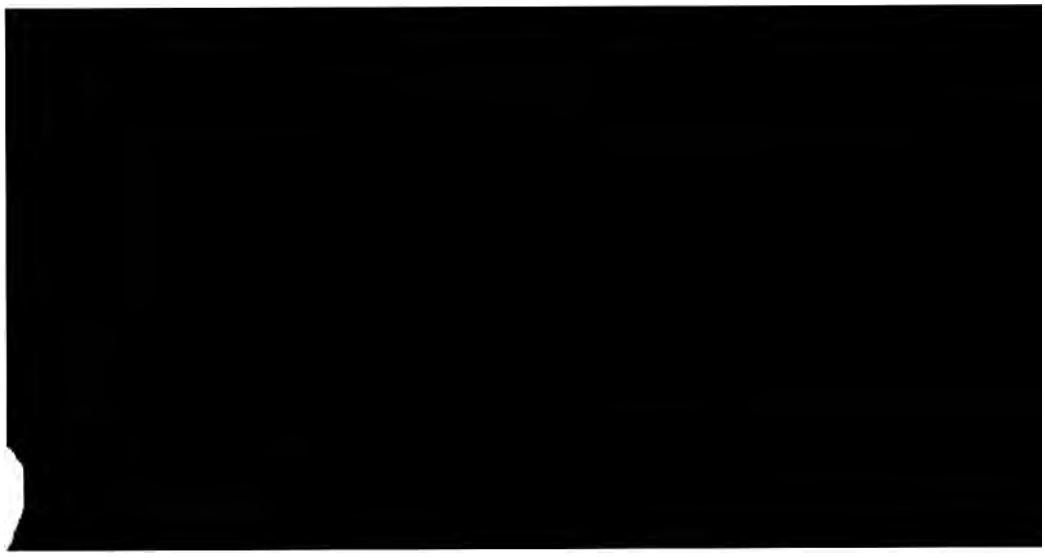
THE FLORA OF JAMAICA

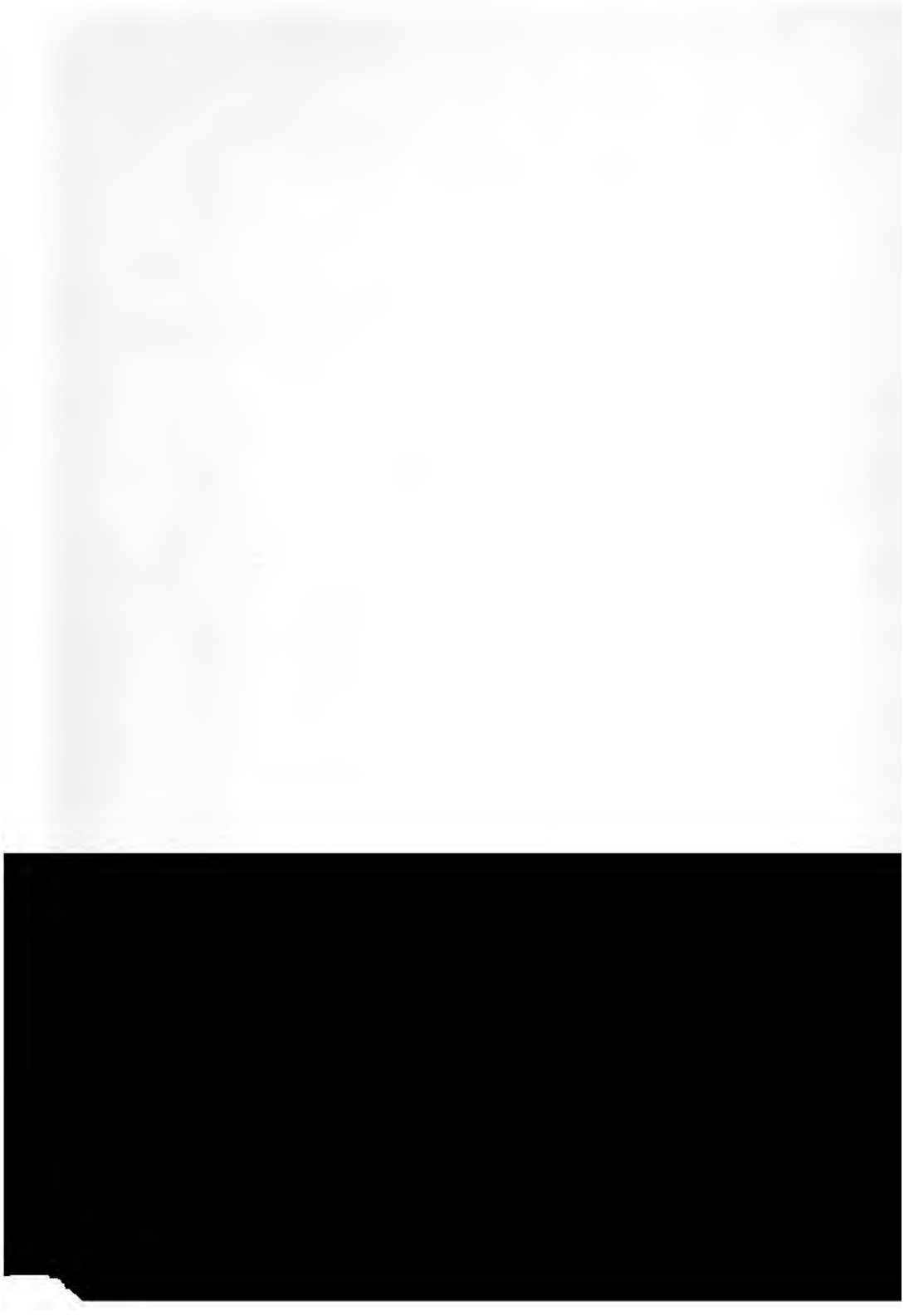
BECAUSE Jamaica is famous for its woods and plants and scented blossoms, one may be pardoned for roughly cataloguing a few of the three or four thousand different species of flowering plants, ferns and forest trees. Little is known of the lichens, mosses and fungi of the island. The casual explorer will notice the beauty of the mosses, and he will observe many varieties of the lichen, and there, unless he happens to be an expert botanist, his interest in these smaller plants will end. But with the flowering plants, the shrubs, and the gorgeous trees it is different. No matter whether one is a botanist or a heathen, frequently the wild luxuriance of a lovely bush forces us to ask its name. And the name frequently cements one's first affection for a wild plant's loveliness. The *Hibiscus*, the blue and white *lignum vitae* flower, the yellow *Kill Buckra weed*, the evening primrose and the passion flower, the wild convolvulus, the iris and the orchid. All these are fascinating names representing fascinating plants and blossoms. In Jamaica, one drives through wild jungle-

land, and mistakes it for a cultivated garden. Green bushes are spangled with flowers of flaming scarlet; yellow bands of dense scrub are patched with fragrant blooms of the most exquisite blue. The wild passion flower, gawdy yet dignified, is to be seen everywhere, and in many places, especially on the lower slopes of the blue mountains, we find a rich profusion of the mysterious orchids — *Arpophyllum spicatum*, *Phaius grandifolius*, *Dendrophylax funalis*, and a hundred other species. The forty varieties of the convolvulus deserve a chapter to themselves. What could be more beautiful than a field smothered by these graceful flowers, showing every tint from scarlet to rose colour, violet, crimson, blue and yellow? Then there are the poppies, the Mexican thistle and John Crow bush; the buttercups, the wild pansies, sweet-william, the scented furze, the acres of white clover and the dandelion. We could go through a list of thousands. I think there is no bush, certainly there is no acre of rural Jamaica, that does not contain its floral decorations, its dozen brilliant blossoms.

Of the trees, the first that thrusts itself upon the notice of the English traveller is the cocoanut palm, which Mark Twain or some one else once described as

HUT ON A PLANTATION, JAMAICA





find the *lignum vitae*, hod-wood, calabash, locust, rain-tree, the West Indian birch, coccus-wood, the sidis-tree (called woman's tongue), the Spanish elm, mahogany, cedar, and the crooked divi-divi. These are mostly timber trees. Among the fruits we find the mango, plum, nazeberry, star-apple, the banana and the orange. These are but names, and though I have not mentioned one tenth of the whole, I will spare you the rest. Jamaica is the land of wood and water, of rich forests and richer plains. You drive along a road which forms a natural arbour miles long, decked at every yard with clusters of flowers, and scented with all the sweetest perfumes of the universe. Then you break into flat plain land, and the fields on either side are a blaze of coloured ground plants; you find the mountain slope and drive along a narrow, precipitous road, and look down from an eerie height on to a deep valley clothed in greenery of the most luxuriant beauty. Fruit-trees are everywhere, oranges green or gold, bananas green or yellow, brown nazeberries, golden grape-fruit, custard apples, mangoes and plums. Then you pass a plantation of pine-apples, and come to the coffee district. It is the richest country in the world, par excellence—the flower and fruit gardens of the West. If you burn a patch of jungle and leave a charred acre of black earth, in two months you will return and find no trace of your destruction. Mother Earth quickly clothes her nakedness in this land of sunshine. If you plant a banana sprig and leave it alone for eight or nine months, you then find a seven or eight foot tree, and a heavy

bunch of fruit ready for gathering. In West Africa they say that if you plant a rotten stick, a barren tree will grow to the height of twenty feet in twenty months, but if you plant a grain of corn nothing will appear. They might with justice say in Jamaica, that the grain of corn would produce a loaf, and the barren stick a lotus tree.

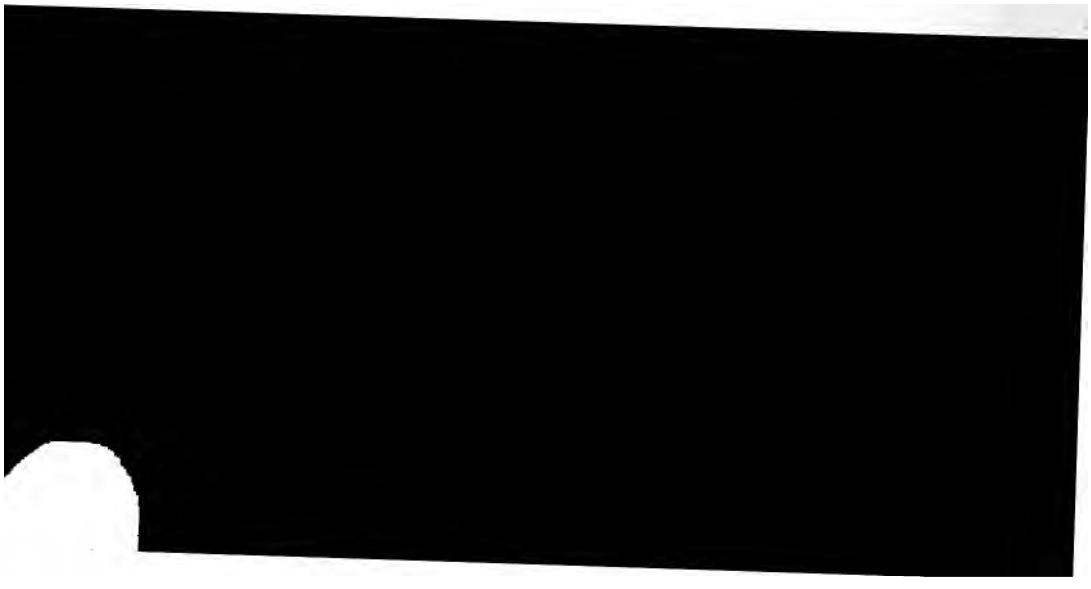
Not only does this wealth of vegetation give to the island a most picturesque appearance, but also it constitutes a natural wealth which hitherto has been hardly sampled. The fruit-trees are beginning to be exploited, and already they support fleets of swift steamers between Port Antonio and America, and between Kingston and Bristol, and bring large profits to intelligent planters. But the exploitation of the timber forest has scarcely begun.

The mahogany is exported in a small way, and valuable logwood finds its way into the holds of ocean-going steamers. Satin-wood is exported in a very small way, and there are large fortunes awaiting men who will develop this trade. Bamboo is valuable, and one occasionally sees a single negro despoiling a mighty clump of giant trees with a light hand chopper, but the

a seaman on a sailing ship, before he took to the trade of writing books, he once carried a cargo of walking-sticks from Kingston to England. I could not find any trace of the industry in the island to-day. But it should be a most profitable one. The Jamaican ebony or caccu-wood is one of the most beautiful woods one can imagine—a dark-coloured, close-grained heavy stick, which, common enough in Jamaica, is rare and valuable in England. And so it is with many other species.

I have not mentioned the Jamaican ferns, yet the island contains almost every species known to the collector, from the tiny, dainty maidenhair to the giant tree-fern forty feet high. There is a deep ravine in the island so crowded with the refreshing greenness of a thousand varieties of the species of the cryptogram that the natives have named it Fern Gully. Here, and in the shadow of the mountain peaks, the fern collector can find every variety of his favoured plant. He can spend months in gathering and cataloguing, but he can never exhaust the resources of the island.

A JOCKEY AT CUMBERLAND PEN, JAMAICA



A WEST INDIAN RACE-COURSE

CHAPTER XXI

A WEST INDIAN RACE-COURSE

We drove to the race-course through a tropical heat haze. The narrow Jamaica lanes and the wider roads were stunned into reverberating silence by the power of the heavy sun. We drove through crazy scents, and the wild music of a million insects,—past banana clumps and patches and plantations, giant cotton-trees and creeping hedge flowers. We forded rivers and rattled across bridges, covering the parched beds of narrow streams. Often, from amidst the yellow greenery, the noise of our horses started a cloud of gaudy moths and painted butterflies. The John crows showed their ragged heads, red and blue, like raw meat baking slowly in the sun, above the dusty grey-black of their faded plumage. Even they found the sun too strong for exercise. So they slept after the manner of their kind, with one eye every watchful for prey or danger. We rattled along under long avenues of bamboo-trees, ungainly giants with feathered heads, unable even in the great heat to prevent the clicking of their hundred knees. The noise of bamboo clumps

suggests the rattling of the bones of a shivering skeleton. The native people grinned us a holiday welcome as we drove along, and the animal life—draft oxen, decaying horses, cheery donkeys and saucy hogs—wondered at the foolishness of our hurry. We reached the paddock gate, and paid our entrance silver to a supercilious half-breed whose status was betokened by the brilliance of his necktie. Then through a green, well-timbered park, we reached the course.

The measured mile was well-fenced and police-guarded; we flourished across its quietest part and entered the inner circle of the ring, the heart of the race-course. The turf was half hidden by a multitude of sportsmen and their attendant females. Black, and yellow, and brown, and copper, and red, and white people; patriarchs, and children in arms; giant negroes and dwarf half-formed half-breeds; programme sellers and vendors of the refreshing juice of the green coker-nut. Buck niggers in white riding costumes, and shabby country folk in decayed khaki. Racing touts in militia blazers, and respectable tradesmen in neckties of red, white, and blue, and black bowler hats. Other things they wore of course, but their appearance was

A COLOURED LADY ON A RACE-COURSE, JAMAICA

KINGSTON,
JAMAICA.

vain did the wily ones lose many dollars to their weary accomplices; the negro proper preferred the excitement of the race.

We saw tables for the dice game, but no gamblers accepted the invitation of the greasy bankers. Groups of women and children sat under the shade of giant trees and made the day a perpetual picnic. The children were very happy, and their buxom mothers slept away the brief minutes in which they could not eat. The young black bucks ogled the young black maidens, but there were no ticklers, and the penny squirt was conspicuous only by its absence. By the weighing shed, and in the centre of the circle of interest, the grand stand, white painted and decked in royal purple, supported the weight of Government and officialdom. Some of those who live in King's House whispered weighty small talk with the bloods of the army or the seniors of the hospital staff. In contrast with the brilliant blackness of the crowd of natives, the grand stand presented a tableau of white dresses and Paris hats and gay parasols. Field-glasses were raised, and waves of humour swept the grand stand crowd in Jamaica just as it happens in happy England. The racing horses and dwarf black jockeys paraded to the official box, and the white ladies flung their generous applause to the winners, just as it was in the days of old, and will be ever more. False starts were made by too eager jockeys who could not hope to win, and a discordant trumpet regularly screeched return as often as half the line of horses sprang forward before

the starter's flag had really dropped. These things happen everywhere; they are the gin and bitters of every race, the sportsman's appetiser, the shower bath to prepare for the cold plunge. When the horses really got away, the heat vanished and pandemonium reigned to the tune of risen Africa. Jamaica vanished, and in its place we saw and heard wild, discordant Africa. We heard the echoes of the war cries of half the tribes that fight in the savage belt of country stretching from Tanganyika to Sierra Leone. The sportsman and the gambler threw off the thin veneer of a chaste and modest civilisation, and became their fathers' fathers' true descendants. The half-breeds shouted and then were much ashamed. The blacks tore the air with their eager hands and flung themselves prostrate, biting the grass in the frenzy of the savage African. And when the race was won, only the winning blacks admitted the fairness of the race. The losing horses had been "bridle pulled" or "kicked" or unfairly dealt with, and the loser paid his debts with great reluctance, conscious of a great grievance. The winner, on the other hand, presented the appearance of fierce, overbearing rectitude. The race was fair, the test

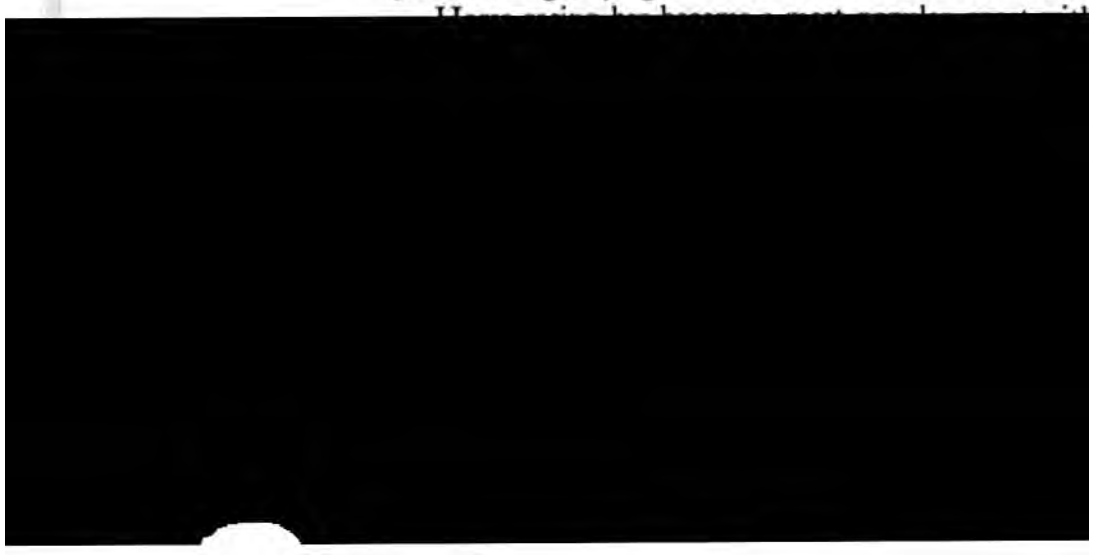
knows that she is pure white, and seeks to prove it to the world by English accent, simpering manners, and the exhibition of a large contempt for black men. Sometimes, it is supposed, she succeeds in impressing dependant country folk. She talks of the England she has never seen as "home," and thinks that heaven is built for white people only. "The sun is not too hot, but the weather is warm," she suggests to her buggyman with fine condescension. The driver agrees and says that he has ventured to take a drink from the water-bottle.

"You done perfectly right," says the white lady graciously.

Since white men are near, and she wishes to display her accent, she adds, "You 'ave my permission to refresh you'self from the bottle as frequent as you desire."

A black man resplendent in a red coat, white riding breeches and yellow gaiters, frankly admits his inferiority to the white man by begging for a penny, a holiday penny. Refused this trifle, he immediately assumes an attitude of equality. Patronisingly he sweeps the ground and the grand stand with his riding switch (his leggings are incorrectly strapped), and asks whether we agree with him that, "These be ver' funny peoples, eh? Too much dirt. Too little money." He sees Forrest making sketches and suggests that we might do infinitely worse than take him as a subject. He switches his leather boots with the riding cane (it is only a hedge switch), and shouts to his brother

black dude a hundred yards away, that he will joi
him as soon as he has finished with his "pals." H
adds a P.S. that he is quite prepared to introduce hi
friend, if that gentleman is so inclined. We are hi
"pals." Then he cocks his hat and chuckles at tw
passing girls, who respond with great enthusiasm
"Nice girls, eh? But not good enough for me, eh
Like to know them, eh?" But it should be admitte
that the worst of the black men is not vainer than som
of the whites. Before the people of the grand stand
some of the junior officers of the army and the hospita
and the medical service, even the civil service, are engage
in a ceaseless parade—the strut of self-conscious vanity
It is these jackanapes that the black men imitate, an
it may be that it is the caricature that shows the fatuit
of the picture. Black vanity is not worse than white
Just as the buck nigger struts for the edification of th
black damsel and her parents, so does the white office
or official. The effect in each case is equally ludicrous
One white official drove to the course wearing a hunting
rig-out, spurs, a single eye-glass, and coloured cammer
band. He wore an air of perfect self-satisfaction. I
Jamaica, single eye-glasses are as common as orchids.



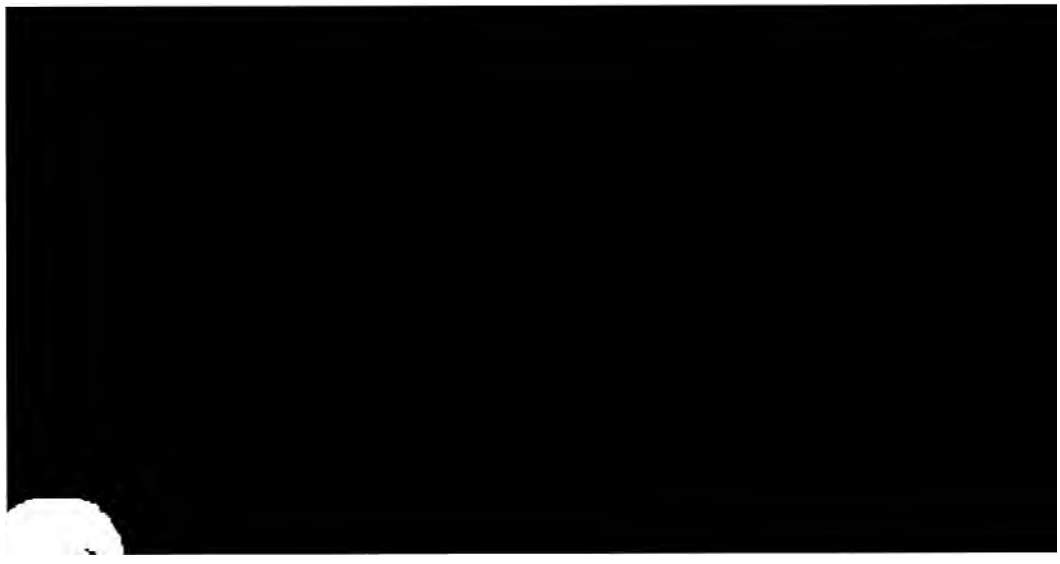
A BUNGALOW ON THE HILLS, JAMAICA

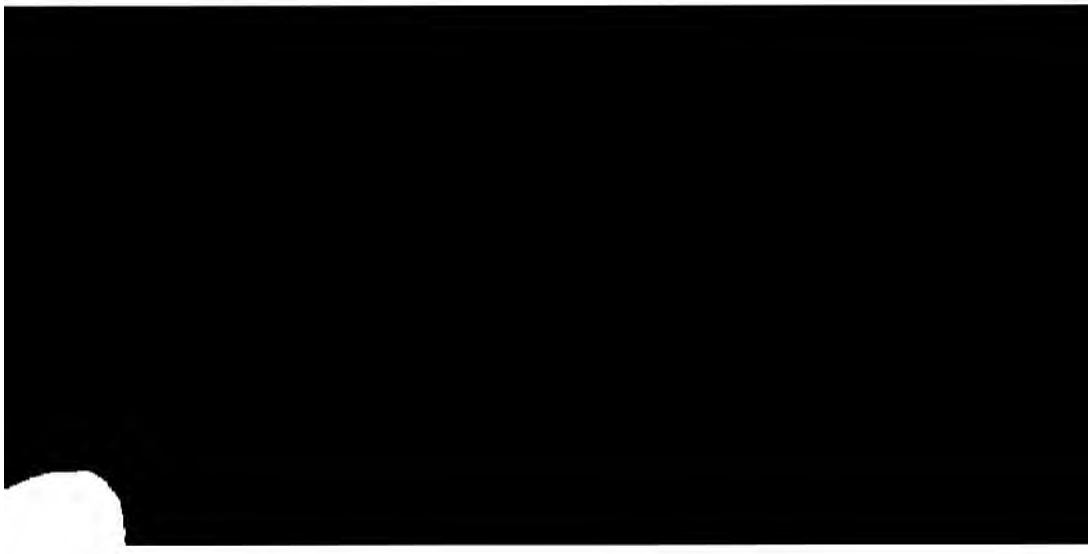
subalterns enter ponies bought on credit, and lose money in order to impress a pitying crowd of non-entities. When a race-horse costs but twenty pounds, and the entrance fee for a run costs only two or three pounds more, no junior officer can afford not to run. The youths of the regiments expect it. So officers under the rank of senior captains must run their ponies as well as attend the meetings. Then they must "back their gees" (as it is said in the vernacular), and lose more money in one day than they should have spent in six weeks.

The seamy side of life is not so well represented on a Jamaican race-course as it is at the average English meeting. Sharpers are not numerous; the three-card experts and die manipulators are few in number and faded and dejected in appearance.

The coloured jockey is a type by himself. In his amber and gold, or pink and yellow, or green and red, and with his bent legs and humped back, he would delight the heart of any disciple of Darwin. On his horse, he looks for all the world like a clothed monkey on a London barrel-organ. He rides with an air of bravado, and a most cruel switch. He gets excited, but seldom loses nerve or head. It is probable that the race is more to him than it ever is to his English prototype, because the heart of a black man is full of jealousy and love of praise. A black jockey never looks a part of his horse. The two are separate and distinct; a comparison between the two would be to the advantage of the horse.

The race-horses and the unharnessed buggy ponies save the Jamaican race-course from absolute vulgarity. Without them the place would have been impossible, quite apart from a racing point of view. The heart of a race-horse is clean, and his nature is superior to that of a half-breed three-card sharper, or a whisky-soaking junior army man of great vanity.





THE MARKET, MANDEVILLE

THE HILL STATIONS

CHAPTER XXII

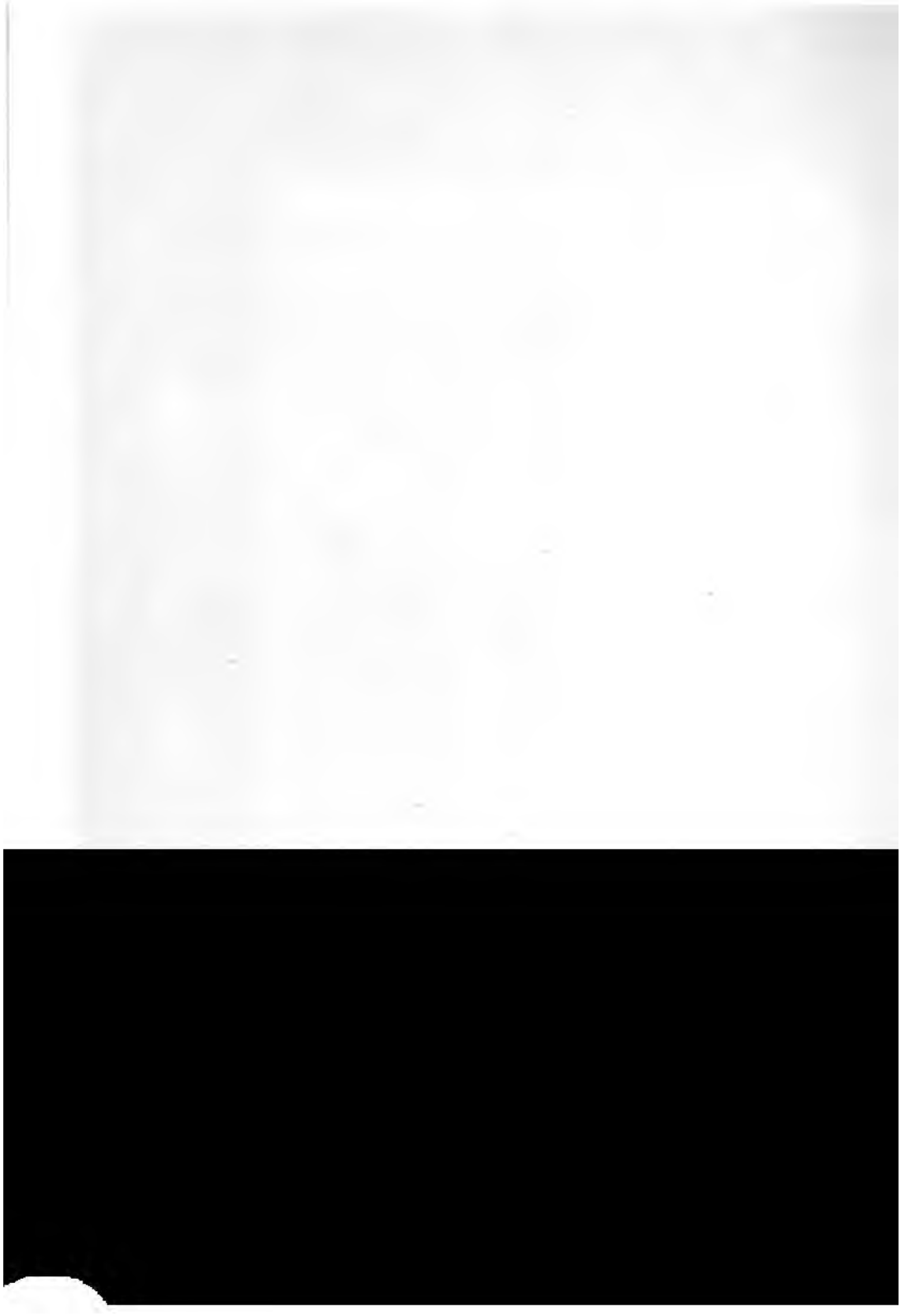
THE HILL STATIONS

THE white inhabitants of Jamaica swear by the hill stations: Newcastle, Mandeville, Malvern, Belle Vue and the rest. The description of the journey to Newcastle will stand as an example of the manner in which one travels to each, except that, in some cases, the railway as well as the double-horse buggy is necessary for the journeying. The tourist should remember that what appeals to the sun-dried Jamaican Englishman does not of necessity appeal with the same force to a tourist in love with the tropics. For my part I found the hill stations all a little dull, as well as very cold and damp. Mandeville resembles a little English country village on a warm, wet day in autumn. Malvern is also very English, and though Belle Vue is more picturesque, it is not worth travelling four thousand miles to see. Kingston and the little towns of the plains repay even a bad sailor the two weeks spent in mid-ocean; the hill stations do not. They are a snare and a delusion and a hollow sham.

Nevertheless we went to them all in the manner of docile sightseers.

Mandeville is famous for its donkey market and cool breeze. I did not see the donkey selling in full swing, but from what I saw of the market-place and the little donkeys I can appreciate the picturesque possibilities of the affair. The cool breeze is far too cold; the cold, damp rain and rain-mist far too penetrating. No, I disagree with the Jamaicans in their estimate of their hill stations. No doubt they are picturesque—all of them. Little villages built on steppes of giant mountains, or small towns scattered over a high plateau. One experiences many climates in climbing to them, and the beauty of the country which separates them from the hot plains is magnificent beyond description. One passes forest land and dense scrub, rushing rivulets and the dry beds of larger rivers. One experiences every colour the imagination can conceive, and sees all the fruits, and flowers, and timber trees to be found in all the world. Yes, they have magnificent approaches these hill stations, and for that reason they are places to visit. It is only their climate one can object to, and that is wonderful too. The English climate gives an English influence to the growing shrubs, and in Mandeville one finds a village

STALLS OUTSIDE THE MARKET, WANDSWORTH



midst of great valleys of wondrous beauty. Or in the morning you can gaze through the damp mountain mist and see the yellow sun rising softly from amidst the forest of palm-trees. You can listen to the full-throated song of birds thanking God for the beauty of life, or see lizards all green and gold, playing along the boughs of giant forest trees. It is a good place, but somehow it lacks the airy-fairy lightness of the hot plains. The natives do not laugh so much, and they are more European in their dress and manners. There are white invalids in the place and you cannot forget that it is a sanatorium.

Belle Vue is rather better and more picturesque and not so good. These contradictions are permissable when one is writing of Jamaica. Belle Vue is better because it is less civilised and less damp. It is more picturesque because the only white man's bungalow was built more than a hundred years ago, and because the natives are less intimately associated with the white people. It is not so good because it is not so beautiful.

Still the view there from the edge of the mountain shelf, which comprises the settlement, gives you a picture of Kingston and eight miles of its northern suburbs, and beyond Kingston the wonderful bay, Port Royal, the palisadoes and the ships at anchor and by the wharf side. This view is compensation for the fatigues of the journey upwards. The house too, the white man's bungalow, is unique and full of history. People say that it is older than two centuries, and its appearance gives colour to the report. Heavy, arched doorways,

great high rooms, solid fittings and small windows. The woodwork is hand-carved and very beautiful; the outbuildings are flimsy and very decrepid. Behind the bungalow is a farmyard built on the model of those to be found in England. There is a large water pool for the cattle, and an extensive yard for the convenience of the farm hands. Here we can see the dairy-work and watch the poultry strutting about in search of toothsome morsels. An occasional dog lies gasping in the sun, and now and then a little pig thrusts his nose into the gateway and gazes longingly at the place so cruelly denied him. The un-English parts are the sheds devoted to coffee-cooking and the place for the storing of cocoa and cinchona.

About the yard, among the coffee and cinchona huts, the cattle stand listlessly gazing earthward, and the mountain goats flick their tails in endless endeavour to disturb offending insects. It is rural—Arcadian in its simplicity and great beauty. The bungalow and farmyard are surrounded by a forest of pimento—an all-spice whose foliage is more fragrant than the spice which makes the cultivation prosperous. Some day, when Jamaicans awaken to the significance of the

A ROAD IN MANDEVILLE

peculiar to the minds of say fifty people. Each man builds his hut according to his own idea of what a hut should be like, and he digs the foundations with no regard for juxtaposition or the symmetry of the whole village. The result is always purely picturesque. Some huts are of heavy grass thatched with banana leaves; others are mud-thatched with cobbled floors. The richer natives build wood houses out of disused packing cases, and live under stencilled letterings which once directed a package out of England. One house was built with box-wood drawn from cases that had contained sugar, biscuits, marmalade, jam, cube-sugar and cigarettes. The result fanned one's pride in the might of England's commerce, since all these things were plainly marked London or Liverpool or Dundee.

About the huts, and amidst the plantations round the village, the black children played their Jamaican games with open-mouthed enthusiasm. The children of the country villages are not overburdened with unnecessary clothing and they are very strong and happy. By mixing with the little children one loses faith in the old belief that it is impossible to really civilise a coal-black nigger. The little ones differ from the white children only in the colour of their skins and the superiority of their physique. A negro child of two runs and laughs and plays as sturdily as does a London child of four. They have a little school of their own and a little church as well. Their one teacher is a lady of colour who lives well away from the village, but the parson is as black as the blackest

among them. The teacher, who is a lady, wears eye-glasses; the parson affects spectacles heavily rimmed with yellow metal. On week days the people of the village, old and young, are very simple; on Sundays they are very religious. The women do more work than the men, though the men are not entirely given up to idleness. The women attend to the home life, the housework, and the nursing, and they tend the cultivation of the little family garden patch which supplies the family with yams and banana, and occasionally a little crop of luscious mangoes as well. The husband hires out his labour to the nearest planter and receives his wage of a shilling a day. He hoes the fields, sees to hedges, carries the water, drives the horses, or donkeys, or mules, or bullocks; gathers the ripened fruit, packs it for the market, and, when neither the planter nor the overseer is within eyeshot, idles away the time to his heart's delight. The women are careful about their own adornment only on Sundays or those rare occasions when it is necessary for them to make the long journey into Kingston market. On week days they seem to wear whatever happened to come handiest when they were engaged in the act of dressing. The

SUNSET OVER THE HILLS

A FRAGMENT

CHAPTER XXIII

A FRAGMENT

I WENT to tea with some people who were neither white, nor black, nor yellow. They were not half castes, not even quadroons. Octoroons they would be called if they were very poor. White they pass as, in the great house they live in. White they are to the few negro workmen they employ.

I give the conversation, not because it is of interest, but to show the vernacular as voiced by the cultured octoroon. They were pleased to see us, and I had the impression that I was undergoing the pleasant sensation of being lionised—such was the warmth of my welcome.

"You take sugar and milk?" I took milk.

"Oh we always take sugar in Jamaica. It grows here you know, and a few years back it was the most perfectly important product of the country," explained the lady, and her husband confirmed her statement with—

"Yes, the English have killed that branch of our commerce by the introduction of free trade in sugar.

The West Indies

My grandfather grew very very rich on sugar ; most of the money he and my father left I am spending in trying to improve the condition of the island. I cannot hope to make money. I do it for the good of my country ; I am what you call a philanthropist ! "

He played with the fine jewelled ring on his left hand and smiled at me, showing a perfect set of large white teeth. His eyes were larger than is common among Englishmen, and his dark hair contained just the suggestion of a curl. His wife was whiter than he, but her eyes were blacker than those of any Englishwoman. Her lips were brown-red, and her hair a wavy black. She spoiled what might have been a strikingly pretty appearance by wearing pince-nez, for which she had no real use. They had plain glasses heavily framed in gold, and they hung from her blouse by a twisted chain of gold and platinum.

" Yes," she said, " we are philanthropists ! "

" I am perfectly conscious that not many of us white men cultivate our plantations as we ought to do. But I know I work unselfishly. I take my country seriously."

The lady added—" That is what the Governor said

HUTS, ST. ANN'S BAY, JAMAICA

A Fragment

"Ah, what would I give to go home," exclaimed my hostess.

"To England?" I asked, nervously.

"Of course," she replied tartly.

"Do you come from London?" I ventured.

"From near London."

The spirit of enterprise entered my soul, and I determined to ascertain whether the good lady had ever seen our little homeland, so I put questions to her which were distinctly not those a guest should play with at an afternoon dinner-table. I entrapped her into many foolish mistakes, but she would never admit that she had never seen England. Her knowledge of places and things, gathered from reading guide-books and London newspapers, was certainly astonishing. But it was not difficult to pierce through the surface crust of her knowledge. She had been introduced to the King of course, but she knew the late Queen better. She didn't care much for the Princess of Wales though the Prince himself was a very interesting man.

They told us of the losses they had sustained through the hurricanes, and the lady explained that because they had lost so many many thousand pounds she was forced to be very very economical with her "money for pins."

But with all their negro-pigeon-English they were hospitable enough, and nothing would have delighted the worthy couple more than our acceptance of their proffered entertainment for many weeks.

"Yes, stop here; we will make you perfectly happy and at home; the house is yours and all the servants,

my horses and buggies (he had one of each), and my fishing rods are at your disposal if only you will remain."

We could not stop, since we were more than seventy miles from the capital and were due to catch a boat in two days. The hostess bewailed the poverty of the household.

"In the period of my grandfather you would not have been permitted to depart in this manner. Then we should have been able to place at your convenience many horses and buggies, so that you could have travelled to Kingston by road, and not in a railway train with negroes. If only we had slaves again and protection also, then you would be able to stop in Jamaica in comfort and luxury."

"But, my dear," remonstrated the husband, "slavery is a thing not to be desired by us cultured gentlemen and ladies. We must protect the weak and fallen; it is our *juty* to heaven to *succure* the black heathen of the negroid race. Never say words in praise of slavery. Our *juty* is to helevate the trampled negroid to our condition of education and refinement."

The lady, so heavily admonished, wept copiously and

of by the loss of slavery and the sugar duty. I weep for the nobleness he shows in speaking like that." The frown on the husband's face became intensified and he gave evidence of the possibility of a new outburst. But I boldly intervened with—"But after all what is a nigger compared with the comfort of white men?"

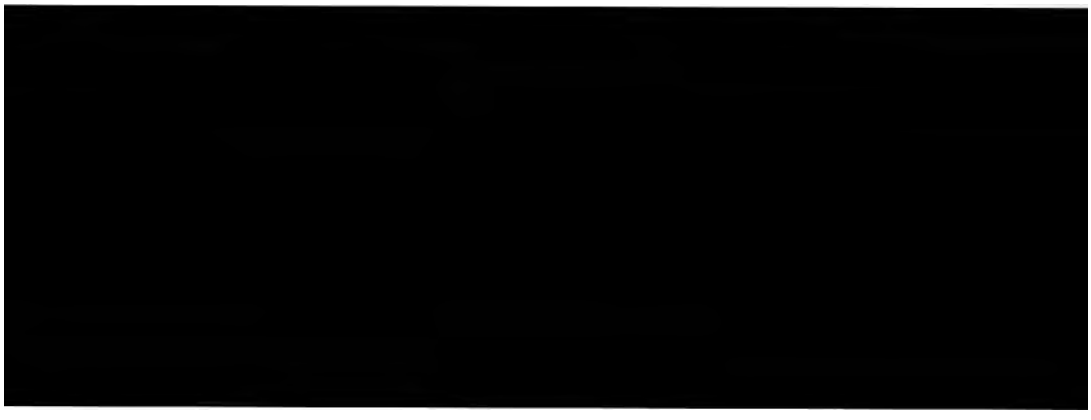
"That's just it," replied our host; "you've just hit it. What is a nigger? He is our unequal in every manner. He is but little better than the animals and beasts of the fields. But just to study him the British Government has spread ruination throughout Jamaica. That is just what I say. What is a nigger that he should have dispoiled me of my wealth?"

While he was delivering himself of this vehement contradiction of his former chastened sentiments it was quite obvious that the nigger he so much despised was in reality his natural grandmother. Our hostess flung aside her eye-glasses and the effect was similar to opening of the lock-gates on the upper reaches of the Thames. The tears poured forth in a copious stream of weeping.

"But, Algey," she sobbed—"Algey you must not forget that you are the nation's protector of the weak, and poor, and coloured. Do not forget that you do your best. The lowest of the low niggers have wives and children."

"True, true," mumbled the husband; "sometimes I forget myself and the words flow out like boiling lava from Vesuvius. But I will continue in the way I have gone for many years, and I will be a help and protector to the poor and down-trodden. The humble of the

THE CATHEDRAL AT SPANISH TOWN, JAMAICA



MATTERS OF INTEREST TO TOURISTS

CHAPTER XXIV

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO TOURISTS

If I have not mentioned all the names of the places in Jamaica dear to the hearts of tourists, and of towns which are the pride and glory of Jamaicans, it is because I do not think such a catalogue would be of general interest. The description of Kingston may stand as a description of Jamaican cities; Port Antonio, Montego Bay, Spanish Town and the rest differ from Kingston in a less degree than Fleet Street differs from the Strand. It would be wearisome to attempt to give a chapter to each.

Port Antonio is the northerly port and the centre of the island's trade with America; Montego Bay is a thriving commercial centre; Spanish Town is the ancient seat of Government. At one time Spanish Town was the island's capital, and there we find a fine monument erected to commemorate the victory of Rodney over the French fleet under de Grasse, and the old cathedral. The cathedral is the oldest building in the island. It links the Jamaica of to-day with the Jamaica of four centuries ago, since it was built by the original

A GARDEN TERRACE, JAMAICA

the days of the millionaire planter. Rose Hall is typical of what the majority of the old West Indian mansions were before the island fell into the clutches of poverty. It is a house with a history. One, Mrs. Rose Palmer, lived there in the days of old, and it is recorded that there she poisoned three husbands in rapid succession. If tradition does not err, this lady must have been of curiously abandoned habits. Under her régime Rose Hall and the surrounding plantations became a famous centre of dissipation and vicious cruelty. At times her slaves were pampered and encouraged into all kinds of most vicious excess ; at others she would flog her whole retinue, and sometimes barbarously murder a few of them, simply for the pleasure she found in the killing. She died at last, and report said she had been strangled by her negro paramour. However, she left sufficient money to pay for the erection of a marble monument in the Parish Church ; a memorial which was to contain a list of her virtues, and hand her name and fame down to posterity. Tradition has it that shortly after the clean white marble was set up in the church a crimson band grew out of the sculptured throat, permanently discolouring the neck and proving that the lady died of strangulation.

Another excellent show place in Jamaica is the Hope Garden, a few miles out of Kingston. This is the head-quarters of the Jamaican botanical department, and it undoubtedly contains one of the most magnificent botanical collections in existence. Here can be found a most extensive and representative collection of tropical

inspection. And the fee that was paid to the negroes for having been examined was placed in our bill of expenses. That, I venture to think, is not the best way to see a new country. It is always better to walk than to take a buggy, but if a buggy must be used then it is well to hire it by the hour or day and tell the driver to drive on—to drive in any direction that leads to no particular place. If you take a ride in the tram-cars it is better to sit in the seats used by the natives, the market-women and the labourers, than to loll in the front benches among the white people. If you want to see the market-place don't take a policeman with you as if you expected to mix with the most abandoned criminals, and if you want an iced Kola go to one of the negro rum-shops for it, and avoid the beautifully-furnished European hotels. The people who "do places" and "see everything" usually mix only with tourists and never get to know the natives. True, they see the scenery and many of the places of interest, but they don't get to know the life of the place, and they can have no knowledge of its people.

If the visitor wants to go to service on Sunday he would find it more interesting to go to a negro

REPUBLIC OF THE WAY, JAMAICA

water-side porters and the black constables, than it is to attend lectures, or read books, or interview politicians, if you want to know anything about the Jamaican labour problem. And all these things are more or less impossible if you explore Jamaica along the lines of a crowded time-table.

That is my opinion. So I am reluctant to suggest that tourists should make a point of seeing this thing or that. I would rather advise a newcomer to buy a buggy and a couple of horses and engage the services of an honest driver. Having secured these he should pack a bag with a couple of flannel suits, a tooth-brush and some under-linen, and then explore the island, practically giving his horses their heads all the way. The only instruction he need give his driver would be, Avoid the railroad track and go through as many villages as possible.

After this the tourist may go home knowing that he has seen something of the island even though he has not visited Spanish Town, Castleton, Gordon Town, Mandeville or Port Antonio. These places are but the names of important centres; Jamaica is the land of wood and water. The plantations and the banana fields, the forests and the rivers, and hedges, and the native villages are more interesting and far more fascinating than marble monuments or anglicised native houses.

Art Emporium
Kingston
Jamaica.

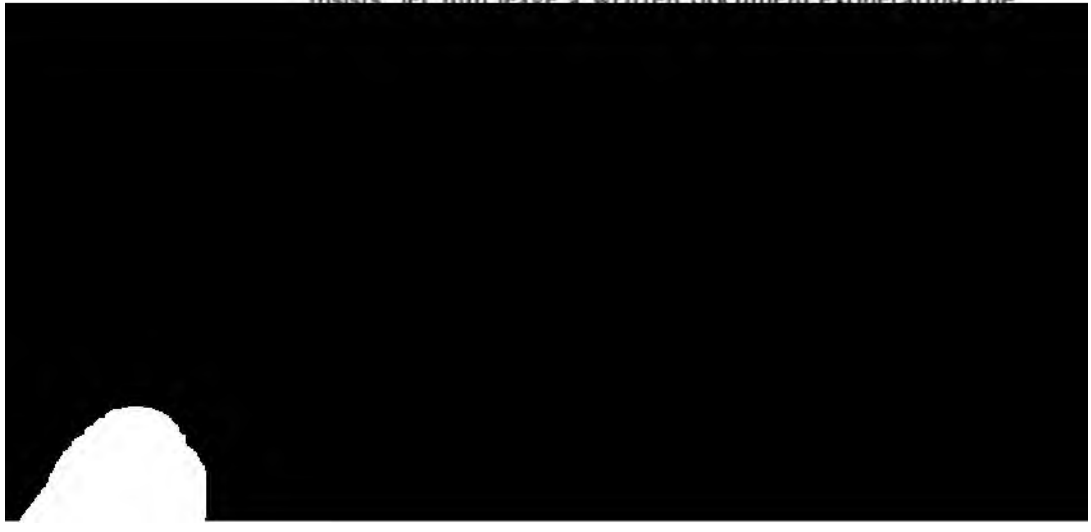
CERTAIN THINGS THE WEST INDIAN TOURIST MUST NOT DO

CHAPTER XXV

CERTAIN THINGS THE WEST INDIAN TOURIST MUST NOT DO

Do not believe every story you hear which makes against the character of the Governor or his wife. It is difficult for a high official, for the direct representative of H.M. the King, to always please every half-white woman and her husband. The jealousy of the half-white for the pure white is very bitter. Do not utterly believe in the alligator stories as told by the junior subalterns of West Indian regiments, or yet the shooting yarns of medical officers of health. All white Jamaicans do not spend all their time in following the festive alligator or in spearing frisky sharks in Kingston Harbour. Do not trouble to drive in any hackney-carriage if your destination is within easy walking distance. The argument with the buggy driver is more exhausting work even than a walk of two hundred yards. Do not go out in the sun without a hat or with only a small cap. Do not drink too much either of the cool, iced lemon squash, or the more-alluring whisky and mineral water. Gin is not a particularly wholesome

stimulant, but it is better for the white man in Jamaica than the finest whisky. Water that is not filtered should be avoided, and it is well always to sleep beneath your mosquito covering. Iced drinks taken in large quantities are the best means of securing a really bad digestion, especially if they are taken when one is very hot. India-rubber shoes are easy to put on, but in the tropics they are occasionally very difficult to discard. A qualified chemist should be requisitioned to remove any half-melted rubber that may have stuck to the soles of your inflamed feet. Panama hats which are loosely plaited are excellent things for wearing on the suburban parades of cool countries; in the tropics head-gear made of felt or pith is better. It is not a good thing to wear heavy clothes, neither is it good to wear too little. The wise man does not plunge into a cold bath when he is very hot, neither does he bathe in the harbour among hungry sharks. Inquiries should be made into the habits and customs of alligators before the tourist takes a dip in some of the up-country rivers, and he should avoid hunting the gaudy butterfly in malarious swamps noted for the propagation of high fevers. It is never a good thing for a new arrival to take risks, but if he insists, let him leave a written document exonerating the



OUTHOUSES NEAR KINGSTON, JAMAICA

CERTAIN THINGS THE WEST INDIAN TOURIST MUST NOT DO

BLACK RIVER, JAMAICA

THE CARIBBEAN GROUP

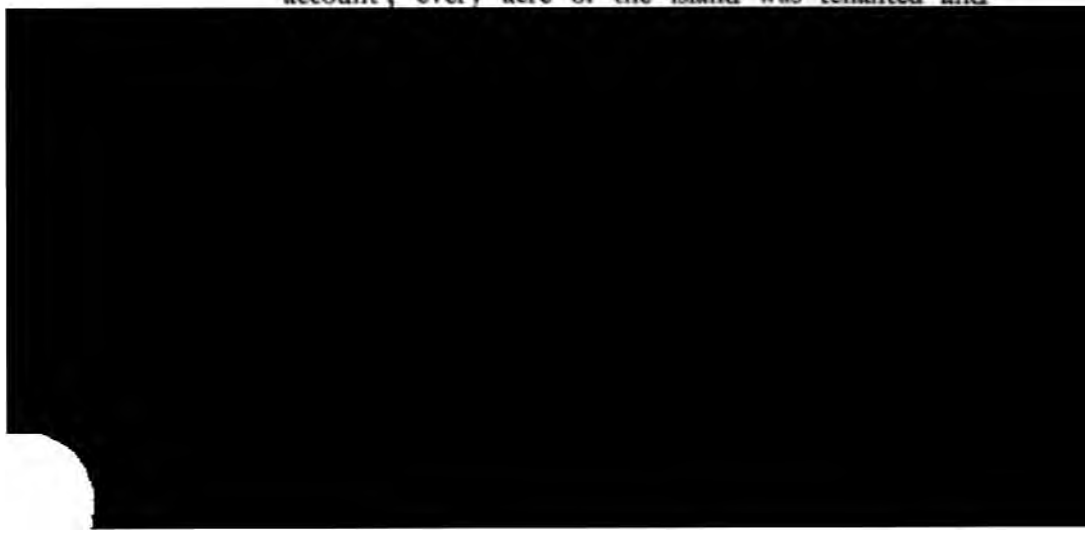
CHAPTER XXVI

THE CARIBBEAN GROUP

BECAUSE I have exhausted so much space on a description of Jamaica, and the people of Jamaica, it must not be imagined that the shadow of the Queen of the Antilles clouds all the other West Indian islands into insignificance. Trinidad, St. Lucia, Dominica, and the rest of the Caribbean group, have much to say in the history of the West Indies. The Jamaica I have described, the Jamaicans I have mentioned, may be taken as being typical of West India. The natives of the other islands are the brothers and sisters of Jamaicans; the roads, and plantations, and mountains of the other islands differ from those of Jamaica only in the matter of proper names. In the West Indies there are many Rio Cobra rivers, though only one of them is known by that name. The bamboos, the pine-trees, and the banana clumps are of the same species in all the different islands. So for the purposes of this book I thought it more convenient to describe Jamaica and mention the other places.

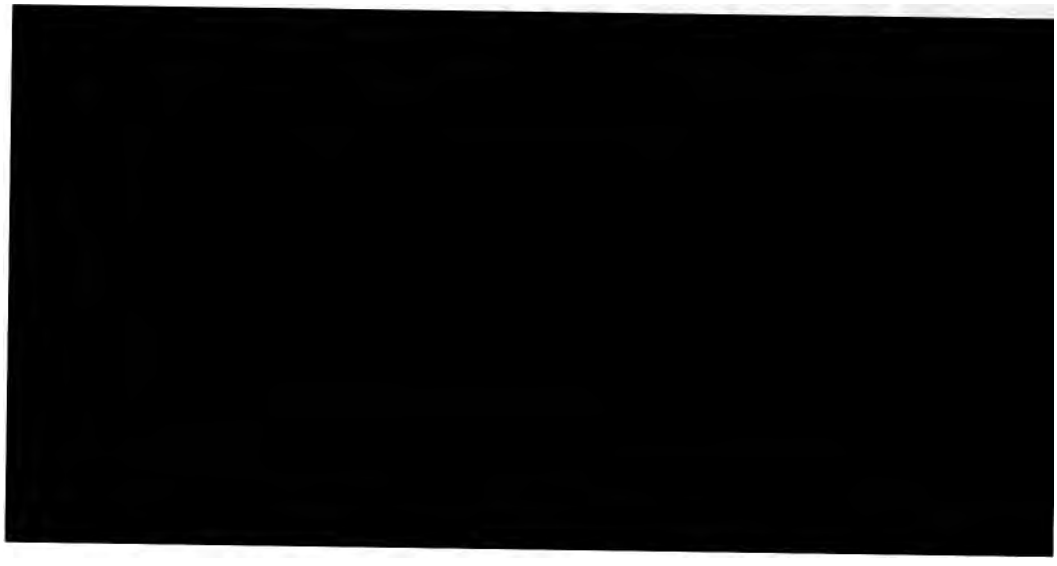
Barbadoes, the most windward of the group, is a

densely populated island only twenty-one miles long. It is an important place and does a good trade in sugar. The West Indian Imperial Department of Agriculture has its headquarters in Bridgetown, the Barbadian capital, and the climate of the island is most salubrious. Barbadoes has been under the unbroken rule of the British for three centuries. Its history, in common with most West Indian histories, opens with long chapters containing the records of great prosperity, of a little island overflowing with riches; of millionaire planters, West Indian luxury, sumptuous mansions filled with gold and silver plate, rare carvings, European art treasures, and the choicest wines. Until very recently Barbadoes was the central market of all the West Indian islands. It was the shipping centre of the West. All the wealth of the Indies had to be landed on the Barbadian quays for transhipment to England, and much of the dust of the wealth remained. Sugar plantations flourished in the island; the planters had no grievances. Even when the decree of emancipation came, and all the slaves were freed, Barbadoes did not suffer. The country was too small to allow any of the freed negroes to cultivate food-plots on their own account; every acre of the island was tenanted and



ROSEAU, THE CAPITAL OF DOMINICA

ROSEAU, THE CAPITAL OF DOMINICA



story. Ruin swept over the island like a tainted wind. The planters, always improvident, fell one by one, and Barbadoes sank to the bankrupt condition of Jamaica.

Nowadays it has recovered somewhat; the introduction of efficient machinery and modern methods of cultivation have resuscitated the industry to some extent. But even to-day Barbadoes does not present the gilded appearance of sumptuous wealth that it must have had less than a century back.

Barbadoes is an island of coral formation, and its dusty roads are always of a blinding whiteness. Some of the buildings in and about Bridgetown are remarkably handsome, and, as in Kingston, Jamaica, a tramway system connects the capital with its suburbs.

Seen from the sea Barbadoes presents a remarkably flat appearance; there are no great mountains or wooded heights in this little isle of rest. One sees nothing but a flat stretch of luxuriant greenery dotted with white hamlets, and streaked with snow-white roads. The harbour of the capital is always crowded with shipping, the quays and dockyards are filled with merchandise, and among the wharf sheds a brilliant crowd of natives cheerfully assumes an air of indolent exertion.

St. Lucia is larger than Barbadoes, and its thickly-wooded hills and sugar-loaf mountains offer greater attraction to the artistic visitor. But commercially it has not the value of its smaller neighbour. Though much larger, the population of St. Lucia is only about one quarter that of Barbadoes. The revenue and the

imports and exports are considerably less valuable. Castries, the capital, is the principal coaling station for the English in the West Indies. The island has a romantic history. More frequently than any other West Indian isle has its nationality been changed. First French, then British, French again, and then, finally won from France by Abercromby, it has remained British ever since. It was in the harbour of Castries that Rodney collected the scattered British Fleet before attacking De Grasse, and establishing the absolute supremacy of Britain in the Indies.

The island is of volcanic and not coral formation, and it is famous for its sulphur springs at Souffriere. The French King Louis XVI. caused several fine baths to be erected at these springs for the use of his troops when the island was part of his domain; though the baths are now in ruins, they remain as one of the show-places of the island—one of the links of the romantic chain of West Indian history.

The French island of Martinique is mainly associated with its famous volcano, Mont Pelee, which gave fearful evidence of its activity two years ago by destroying the prosperous town of St. Pierre. Before the annihilation

MONT PELÉE, MARTINIQUE

shores and found new homes in places less obviously treacherous. Probably many years will elapse before Martinique once more regains the prosperity which was buried beneath the lava streams of Mont Pelee.

The appearance of the place to-day is not attractive. The blackened ruin of a rich city lies on the surface of the land like an unwholesome scar. The people have not yet recovered from the shock of that terrible visitation. And at the summit of the dread volcano the gathering mists always suggest new disaster. The colonists have lost faith in a land in which life is held at the mercy of a live volcano. They seem to feel that they are sitting at the feet of a fearful death. Martinique is a land of high mountains; it is a rugged, picturesque, wild country, menacing rather than alluring—a fit resting-place for the giant Mont Pelee. So the island appears to-day, as you view it from the deck of an ocean liner. Two years ago the place was a laughing, wooded, sunlit isle; St. Pierre was the capital of West Indian gaiety. The French trained natives, gayer and more brilliant than the British blacks, laughed in the little shaded paths about the foot of Pelee. And the reflection of the twinkling lights of St. Pierre danced on the surface of the captive waters of the bay.

It should not be understood that I suggest that Pelee's lava-cascade destroyed the whole of Martinique. Pierre was but a corner of the island. Fort de France and the other towns remain. The few thousand souls that perished left behind a population which still

numbers over one hundred and fifty thousand people. The fruit trees and the plantations, the factories and nutmeg groves, remain. But the ashes of St. Pierre remain also, and above the ashes the giant crater of Mont Pelee still frowns beneath her crown of lowering mists.

Dominica is British. Though of volcanic formation the island is not possessed of a Mont Pelee. A marvellously productive country is Dominica, happy in the possession of plantations richly productive of limes, cocoa, sugar, and coffee.

It is another land of wood and water. Hundreds of tiny, rushing streams flow down from the mountains through the rich valleys into the sea. And all the mountain sides and deep ravines are clothed in verdant forest trees.

Roseau is the capital—a picturesque if somewhat dilapidated city bearing unmistakable evidence of its French foundation. The roofed market-place is near the sea-shore, and the cool sea breeze makes the place endurable even in the hottest hour of a crowded day. Among the bush-land of the interior a few Carib families still remain—shy, inoffensive people, who do not

AN OLD MAN, ST. THOMAS

Even Barbadoes in its palmiest days was not richer than Dominica is certain some day to be. Acres of the most fertile country in the world lie fallow within the confines of this island, whose name is written large in Britain's naval history. Virgin forests of wild fruit trees still cover vast tracts of a country which one day will be claimed by English husbandmen. Like Jamaica, Dominica cries out for men—new men, new energy, new enterprise. In England we associate our West Indian islands with only a dead prosperity. In the West Indies one encounters ample evidence of present wealth and great promise of future riches.

Antigua is a British sugar island—a hundred square miles of gently undulating country, which in appearance is more English than West Indian. From a tourist standpoint it is famous for the beauty of its white-sanded bays, and for the old naval dockyards at Elizabeth Harbour.

St. Kitts, or St. Christopher, to give the oldest West Indian Colony its full and dignified title, is an island of an area of only sixty-eight square miles. Almost every acre of the land is well planted with flourishing sugar cane. Adjoining St. Kitts is its sister colony, Nevis. Only a strait three miles in width separates the two islands. Nevis is chiefly interesting by reason of the fact that in a once-stately mansion known as Montpelier, Nelson was married to a rich widow of the island.

Trinidad, the most southernly and the second largest island of the British group is, in a way, the most remarkable of all. Port of Spain, the capital, ranks

NEVIS

NEVIS

NEVIS

NEVIS

nature is written in vivid colours throughout the island's tangled forests and deep, still lakes.

The enchanting island has a history brimming with romance. Its story contains the names of Columbus, its discoverer; Raleigh, who visited the place in search of a gold mine, and many of our famous old British sea-dogs. Trinidad started of course by being annexed to Spain; then France took the place and held it until just over one hundred years ago, when England claimed it as her own. The white inhabitants to-day are members of these three European races. The coloured people are pure negroes, Indian coolies, and Spanish, French and English half-breeds. The latter element is particularly strong. Consequently, in Trinidad there are many political agitators.

Visitors will land from their mail steamer at Port of Spain and find themselves in a foreign-looking British West Indian capital, in an atmosphere of tramways, telephones, suffocating heat, negroes, and spasmodic bustle and noise. It is a town containing buildings reminiscent of its Spanish, French, and British periods of Government. Houses in all the styles of each nationality will be found on every side. Each particular style of architecture has of course been West-Indianised —altered for comfort's sake, and so stage-managed, as it were, that it is converted into style suitable for a living place in the fearful heat of the hottest island in the Indies. The tourist will find the market-place and a few interesting churches. He will feel that he has been landed into a hothouse. The atmosphere of Trinidad

is like that of an English hothouse on a scorching summer-day. The brilliant foliage and the constant banks of gaudy blossoms will help to support the illusion. He will pant for breath and speedily seek the cool shelter of a heavy verandah. It may be that at first he will wish that he had not landed. But after an hour or two he will have become accustomed to the curiously-suffocating heat, and the beauty of the place will evidence to him the wisdom of his coming.

He will remain for a day or two in Port of Spain, and then in the course of many excursions he will visit the chief places of interest. The pitch lake is an inexhaustible sea of most valuable asphalt. Nearly two hundred thousand tons of this asphalt were exported last year: it is a most valuable commercial commodity, and one of the wonders of the island. Though it cannot be described as being beautiful, or even picturesque, this hundred-and-ten acre patch of fathomless bitumen is worth seeing. Commercially it is of the utmost value to the island, since the annual value of the pitch exported is something like one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The waterfall at blue basin should be seen by all who land in Trinidad. Nothing could be

you approach it through a light haze of tinted mists, and when you stand face to face with the broad white streak of falling water you are half stunned by the noise and the heavy splashing. The beauty of the place is overpowering. The heavy noise of falling water is so out of place in that brilliant valley of languorous silence that it produces something in the nature of a discord —an entrancing, intoxicating discord.

There are other towns beside Port of Spain to visit. San Fernando, Arima, and Princestown should be seen if one's visit is likely to be a long one. True, they are typical of all other little West Indian towns, but each contains an individuality—a something not held in common with other towns, so, if you can spare the time, see them all. Then there are the Maraval Reservoirs and the Five Islands.

Tobago is a little island attached to the Government of Trinidad. It is a healthy West Indian colony supporting a population of 20,000 souls, only about one hundred of whom are white. The industries of Tobago are purely agricultural : coffee, cocoa, and india-rubber are extensively cultivated. From the tourist's point of view the little place is chiefly famous for its beautiful birds and butterflies. The angler can find many varieties of fish in its rushing streams, and fruits and vegetables grow in the richest profusion all the year round.

A GUADELOUPE LADY

HAYTI

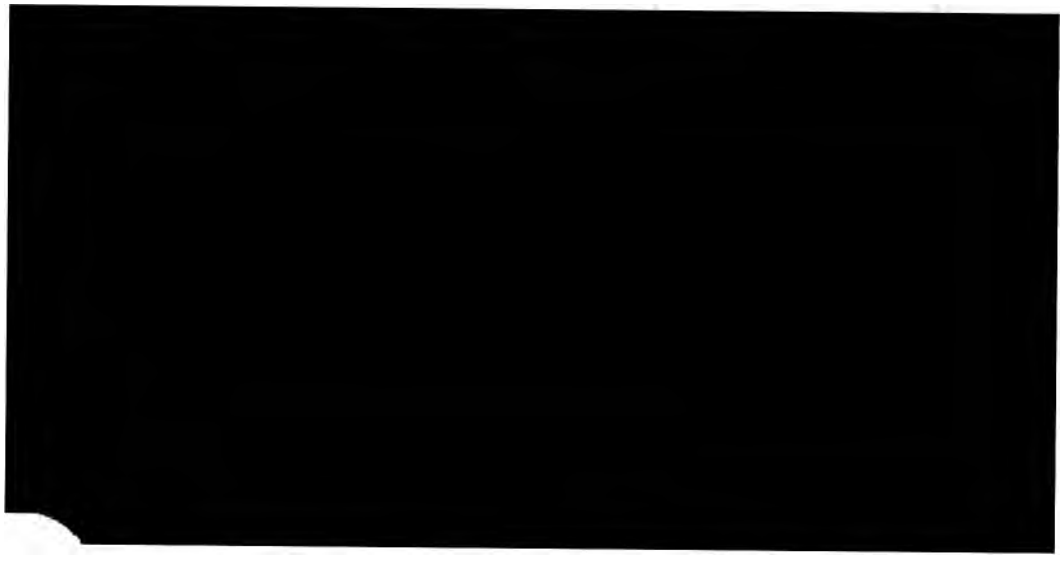
CHAPTER XXVII

HAYTI

HAYTI is a black republic—a place where the negro race is predominant. No white man may claim any plantation or even an acre of land in the Haytian republic as his own. The negroes refuse to grant land tenures to any "white trash." Europeans exist in the island only on sufferance, and they are subjected to much the same treatment as in the days of old was meted out to negro slaves. It is the least desirable country in the world for the white man to select as his home.

The republic spreads about halfway across the island of San Domingo, whose history is rich in tales of bloodshed, piracy, and worse. The first of the West Indian islands to be annexed by Europe, San Domingo, or Española as Columbus named it, was the earliest Spanish settlement in the western world. As in Jamaica the Spaniards introduced religion so effectually that the original inhabitants, the gentle Caribs, were crushed out of existence. The Africans were introduced to do the work of the plantations. The Haytian portion of the island was afterwards wrested from Spain by the French

HUTS ON A COUNTRY ROAD, JAMAICA



counted entirely humorous were it not for the constant bloodshed.

Morally the Haytians are impossible people. Snake worship and cannibalism, and all the old superstitions of barbaric Africa, still prevail in the gilded republic. Their religion is frequently but a thin veneer of polish, worn to cover the arts of fetish worship and human sacrifice. The lives of the citizens are not respected so much by the prevailing government as are the political rights of the electorate. The whole republic is one festering mass of corruption. The officials are as a rule entirely corrupt, the European church has practically no real existence, sober "home life" is almost unknown. The men of the place are as a rule entirely vicious, unlicensed and unprincipled; the women are unmoral and entirely without culture.

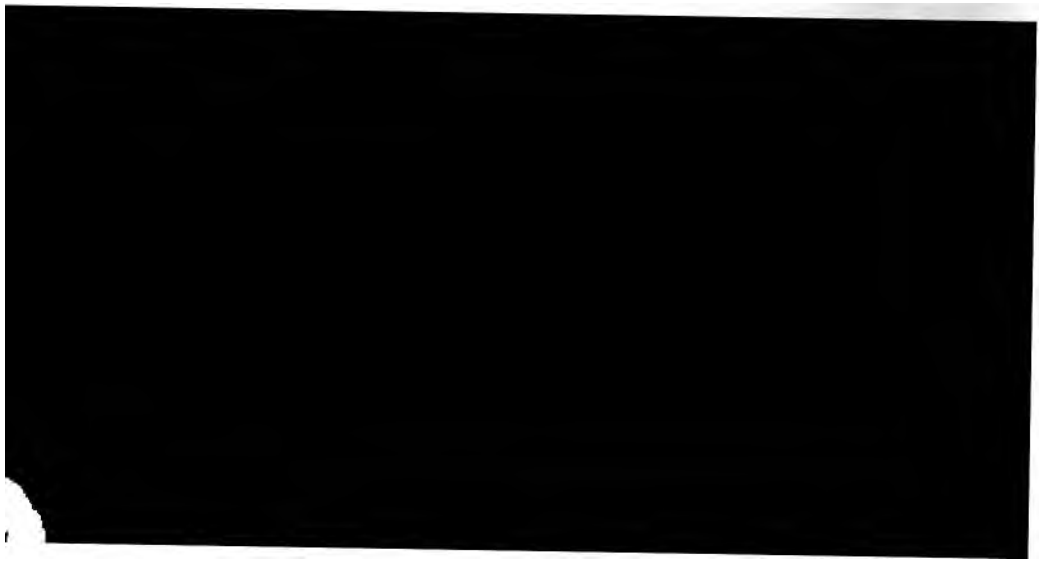
It is a curious place to look upon, this Hayti; but it is a most unsafe place to travel in. The people of the capital, Port-au-Prince, live in the midst of a city of fine buildings and garbage-littered streets; the women parade the white squares in European costumes of Parisian silks and high-heeled, patent-leather shoes. The men swagger in guady, tinselled uniforms of extravagant design and indifferent workmanship, trailing tailor-made swords, and jingling heavy South American spurs. Their manners are entirely without polish, though they swagger with the air of a crack German cavalry colonel mixed with the braggadocio of a half-bred Spanish Mexican. The children of the reigning officials and the sons of the richest merchants are sent to

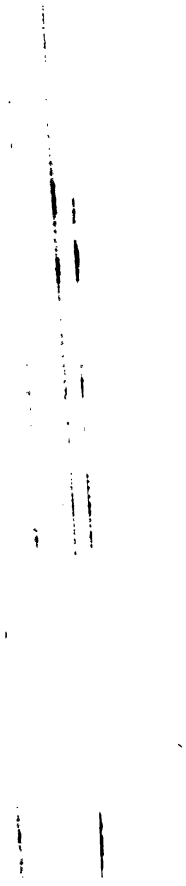
Paris to be educated. These young people return to Hayti with a deep knowledge of all the vices of the gay capital, and many trunks filled with gaudy finery which, probably, have been obtained on credit. The condition of the people of the black republic is similar to that of any Gold Coast tribe of negroes with a rich country and a knowledge of the vices of Europe,—similar, except that whereas the Haytians are all powerful and independent, the Gold Coast tribe is watched by a strong white government and kept within the bounds of decency.

It will be gathered that Hayti is not a pretty place. I would not have troubled to mention it at all had it not been that the black republic has a profound significance to all British people who take their Empire seriously. Hayti is the world's object lesson of what a country must become so soon as the negro obtains fairly within his grasp the reins of government. In discussing the West Indian problems it would be well if Britain always kept in mind the condition of this one black republic in the west. Why? Because it is estimated that Jamaica has a population of seven hundred and fifty thousand people, ninety-five per cent of whom

Hayti is. And the real nature of a negro can never be discovered until he is placed in a position of unfettered power. Hayti is a very few hours sailing distance from Jamaica, and Kingston is the resting-place and recruiting-ground for all the deposed or temporarily overshadowed Haytian presidents. President Salomon, one of the most powerful rulers Hayti ever had, was at one period a refugee of Jamaica, and there he became the intimate friend of Gordon. The Gordon riot was crushed by the Jamaican Government (though the strong man who dealt summarily with the rioters was disgraced in consequence), and Salomon returned to rule in Port-au-Prince. But in Jamaica to-day there is evidence that intrigue and disaffection have not been entirely banished from the hearts of all her coloured citizens.

PASSENGERS EMBARKING FROM A QUAY,
ST. ANN'S BAY, JAMAICA





IN CONCLUSION

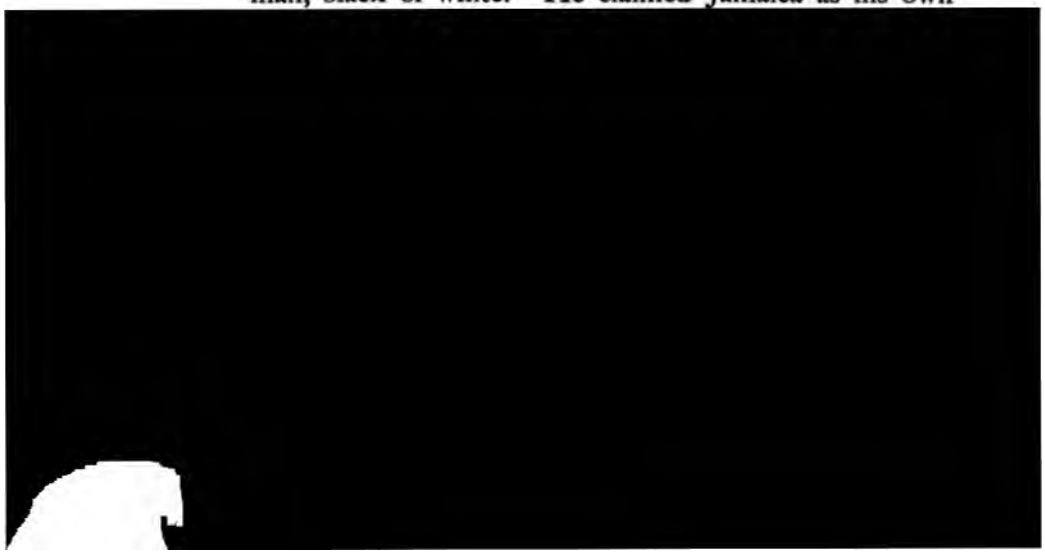
CHAPTER XXVIII

IN CONCLUSION

It may be that I am entirely unfitted to deal at any great length with that most complicated, most difficult of all problems, the negro question. The problem is a matter which must be left to the consideration of statesmen who, guided by the experience of years of personal contact with black men, are entitled to be considered as experts. But the negro question is one which forces itself upon the notice of all people who visit any country where, numerically, the black man is predominant. The British West Indian islands each and all are at once both British Colonies and black man's countries. Where black people are so pre-eminently strong, it is impossible for the white men, no matter what their race, to undertake the work of government unless by the express desire of the black men, or because of the crass ignorance and weakness of the negro race. How comes it that less than twenty thousand white men rule three quarters of a million coloured people in Jamaica? That is the question—pregnant with possibilities—that confronts one after a stay in that

fascinating island of the west. The cause must inevitably be found in the weakness, the ignorance, of the blacks. The negro is not fit to govern—therefore he must not govern ; so say the English, and in accordance with the dictates of that creed have the English framed their West Indian laws. And undoubtedly it is good that it should be so. The negro is not fit to rule ; he is not capable of efficient self-government. But how long will the negro himself believe that he is incompetent ? Will he, or will he not, in the future—the near or distant future—ever come to think that home rule is his birthright. Already many negroes hold that opinion as individuals. Will the coloured race ever think so collectively ? Will the coloured class ever call for freedom in tones of absolute, organised unison. If so, what will happen ?

I have already recorded the opinions of a coloured man in this direction ; I have also shown the ideas on the subject common to the majority of white men. The one, thoroughly representative of his class, appealed for greater freedom. In cool argument he suggested that absolute political freedom was the birthright of man, black or white. He claimed Jamaica as his own



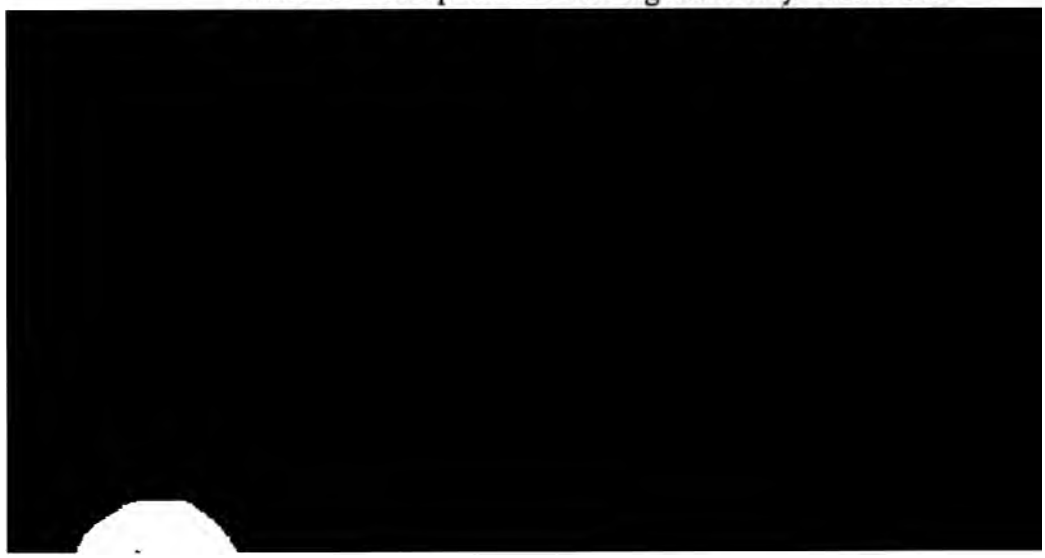
EVENING AFTER RAIN, JAMAICA

enclosing the ambition of a people whom we are, by religion and by science and by common sentiment, taught to regard as our very equals. By the law of the West Indies the black man is the equal of the white. Yet my friend suggested that rifle-shots would be necessary should that race demand a practical exhibition of that absolute liberty which is reckoned by the English to be part of the heritage of all British-born subjects, black or white.

Surely it is a curious condition of affairs? Under British rule, the black man is, theoretically, the equal of the white. Practically he is nothing of the sort. Practically it is not even admitted that he is. Or why is it necessary to continue the West Indian system of Government by the Crown?

Now this is all very well. No doubt it is a convenient thing for us and for the peoples of all European countries to theorise about the brotherhood of man. In England and in all countries where the negro population is insignificant, such a question is only a matter of abstract principle; it is a pleasant sop to one's inherent quality of benevolence to so decide,—to generously overlook obvious shortcomings and proclaim it abroad that Britain accepts her black people as equals —brothers in spirit and in fact. No doubt, in Britain, this is a very comforting creed to absorb in its entirety, and then forget. But not so in any West Indian island. There the fatuity, the impossibility, the impracticability of the scheme is immediately obvious. The farce of the whole thing is at once evident. The average white

man cannot count the average negro as being his absolute equal. By reason of the dictum of the homeland he must pretend to do so. Officially he must, with his lips, proclaim the actuality of this impossible equality, but he must do it with his tongue in his cheek. He must see to it that the black man is convinced of the honesty of his protestations—that the blacks believe. And yet he must see that the black man does not attain any of the natural results such a condition would inevitably bring into existence. It is like the old tree in the garden of Eden. The tree of liberty is put before the eyes of the black man who is told that the fruit and the blossom is his very own—but that he must not touch it. That is the condition of affairs. Nominally the equal, the black man is actually not the equal. And this he is beginning to realise. The spread of education among the coloured race in the West Indies is bringing into existence a generation of dissatisfied agitators. The negro is becoming ambitious; he is beginning to become ambitious for his race. As soon as the race feels its strength it will use it for its own ends. It will demand political freedom. The creed of my coloured friend of the Spanish Town highroad may be allowed



government in the West Indies? If this country is reconciled to the eventual existence of a black government then the existing system is good enough. If not, something ought to be done immediately,—though exactly what could be done I cannot pretend to know. I leave that matter to the consideration of people more qualified to make suggestions. I believe that the negro is, and at any rate for many generations will continue to be, incapable of self-government; I know that no white people could live in a country ruled by black men. And I firmly believe our West Indian possessions are in danger of falling under the government of their black people.

That, in my opinion, is the greatest of all the West Indian problems. Commercial difficulties will solve themselves. The natural riches of the beautiful islands of the West must sooner or later bring a great harvest of gain to their owners. The sugar industry will revive, the West Indian fruit trade is to-day only in its infancy. The Caribbean islands are destined to become the fruit gardens of the world. And many smaller industries will spring into existence. There can be no doubt as to the richness of the industrial future of the Indies. The one difficulty is this political difficulty: the inevitable struggle for supremacy between the white man and the black.

Index

Alligator, West Indian, 174
America, intervention of, 158
Animal life, 140
Antigua, 251
Arima, 255

Barbadoes, 245
Beet bounties, 183
Belle Vue, 215
Blackbeard, 6
Black children, 217
Blue Mountains, 15
Bog Walk, 137
Buccaneers, 6

Caribs, 9
Cassava starch, 191
Cathedral, the old, 229
Chamberlain, Mr., 190
Children, black, 217
Cromwell, the Protector, 9
Cuba, 14

Dignity dance, 85
Dominica, 250

Emancipation Act, 21

Filibusters, 6
Fort Augustine, 174
Fruit trade, the, 189

Gordon, 263
Government, representative, 146
Grand Cayman, 76

Hayti, 259
Hope Garden, 231
Hunts Bay, 175

Imperial line of steamers, 190
Intervention of America, 158

Labour question, 186
Liberation Act, 187

Malarial fever, 24
Mandeville, 214
Martinique, 248
Montego Bay, 229
Mont Pelée, 248
Morant Point, 15
Morgan, 6

Nevis, 251
Newcastle, 109

Octoroon, the cultured, 221

Pitch lake, the, 254
Political agitators, 160
Political revolution, 148
Politics, 145
Port Antonio, 229
  Royal, 6, 15
  of Spain, 251, 253
Princestown, 255

Railway, 165
Revivalist meetings, Jamaican, 70
Rio Cobra, 137
Roseau, 250
Rose Hall, 230

St. Kitts, 251
St. Lucia, 247
Salomon, President, 263
San Domingo, 259
San Fernando, 255
Settlements, native, 216
Settlers, absolute, 161
Soda-water compartment, 165

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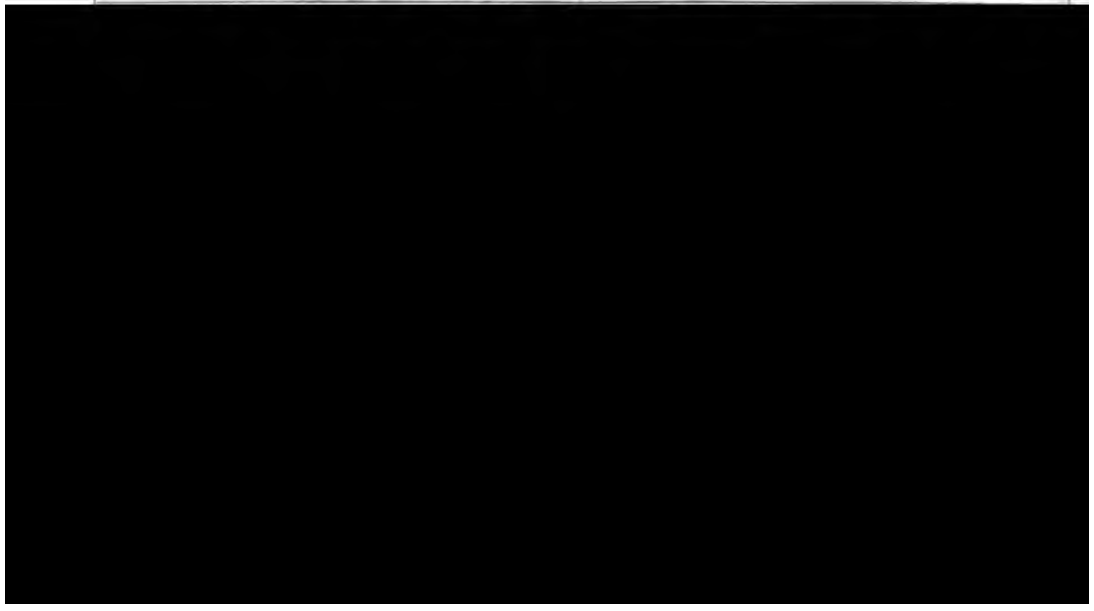

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